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BLM WILDERNESS PROGRAM

WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS
Challis, North Idaho and Owyhee
IDAHO

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

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W55
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BUR OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

CHALLIS

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TABLE 1

SUMMARY TABLE - CHALLIS WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

<u>WSA</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Suitable Acres</u>	<u>Nonsuitable Acres</u>
Corral-Horse Basin (46-11)	48,500	0	48,500
Jerry Peak (46-14)	46,150	26,750	19,400
Jerry Peak West (46-14a)	13,530	0	13,530
Totals	108,180	26,750	81,430

Location

The Challis Study Area is located in central Idaho approximately 120 air miles northeast of Boise, Idaho. Challis, Idaho (pop. 2,000) is the major community in the area. The three WSAs included in this study are located on the East Fork of the Salmon River, about 25 miles south of Challis.

Public Comments Summary

The Draft EIS formal comment period was from May 21, 1982 to August 2, 1982. A public hearing was held June 30, 1982 in Challis, Idaho. Thirty-eight comments (31 written, 7 oral) were received.

Two commentors favored the Draft EIS's preferred alternative, in which Jerry Peak West, WSA 46-14a, and a portion of Jerry Peak, WSA 46-14, were recommended as suitable. Five comments supported wilderness for WSAs 46-14 and 46-14a, omitting any mention of 46-11. Eight comments favored the all wilderness alternative asking BLM to reconsider the recommendation for WSA 46-11. The commentors felt that the area was wilderness in character, offering outstanding opportunities for solitude, and protection for wildlife and recreational values. Fourteen comments supported the no wilderness alternative citing either potentially valuable mineral or energy resources (4), human impacts to naturalness (2), or too much existing wilderness (8), as justification for a no wilderness recommendation. As a result of public comment and further evaluation, the preferred alternative was changed. (See table 1.)

Number of Communications Supporting:

Preferred Alternative - Draft EIS	2
All Wilderness Alternative	8
No Wilderness Alternative	14
Wilderness Alternative for 46-14 & 46-14a*	5
Wilderness Alternative for 46-14 & 46-14a, Alt. P-Partial Protection for 46-11	1
No Wilderness Alternative for 46-11 & 46-14*	1
No Wilderness for 46-11*	1
Number Taking No Position	6

*Commentors did not include all WSAs

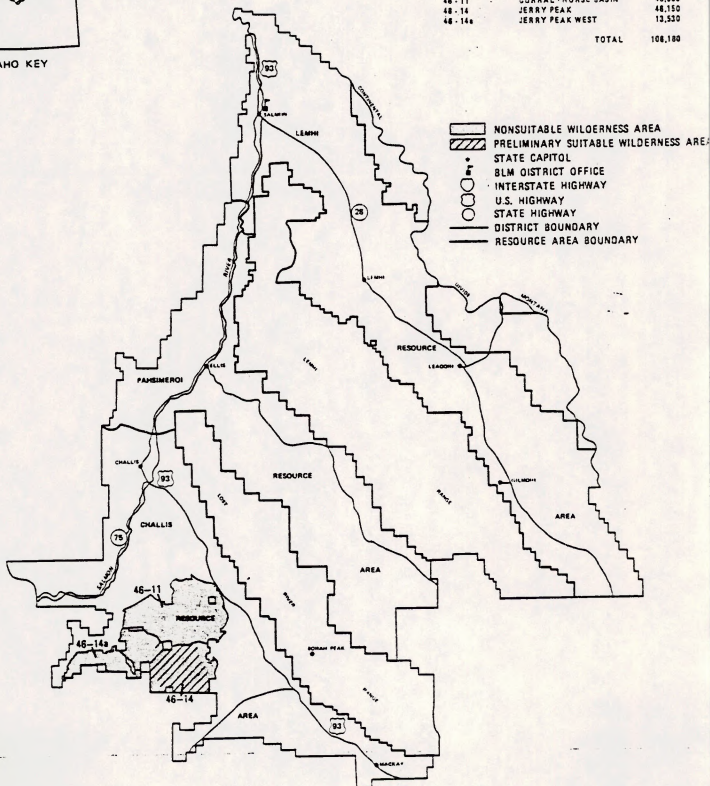
MAP 1 CHALLIS GENERAL LOCATION MAP

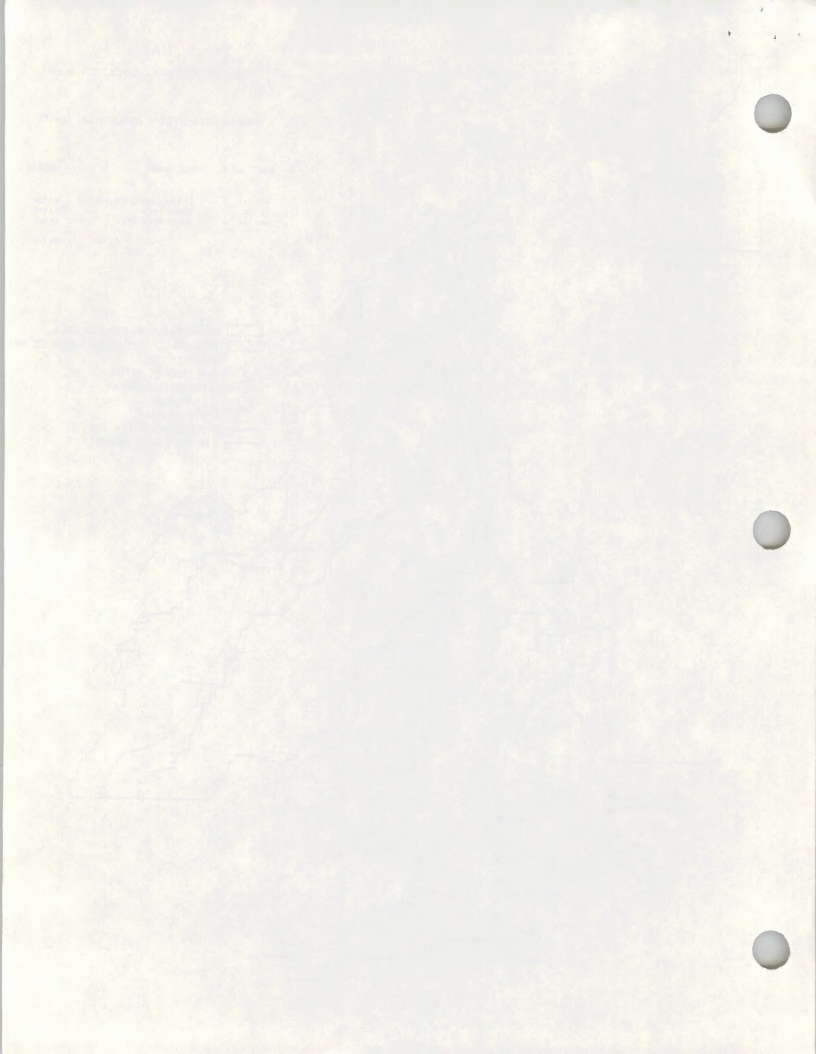
WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA) UNITS

UNIT NO.	WSA NAME	ACRES
46-11	CORRAL HORSE BASIN	48,500
46-14	JERRY PEAK	48,150
46-14a	JERRY PEAK WEST	13,520
TOTAL		108,180



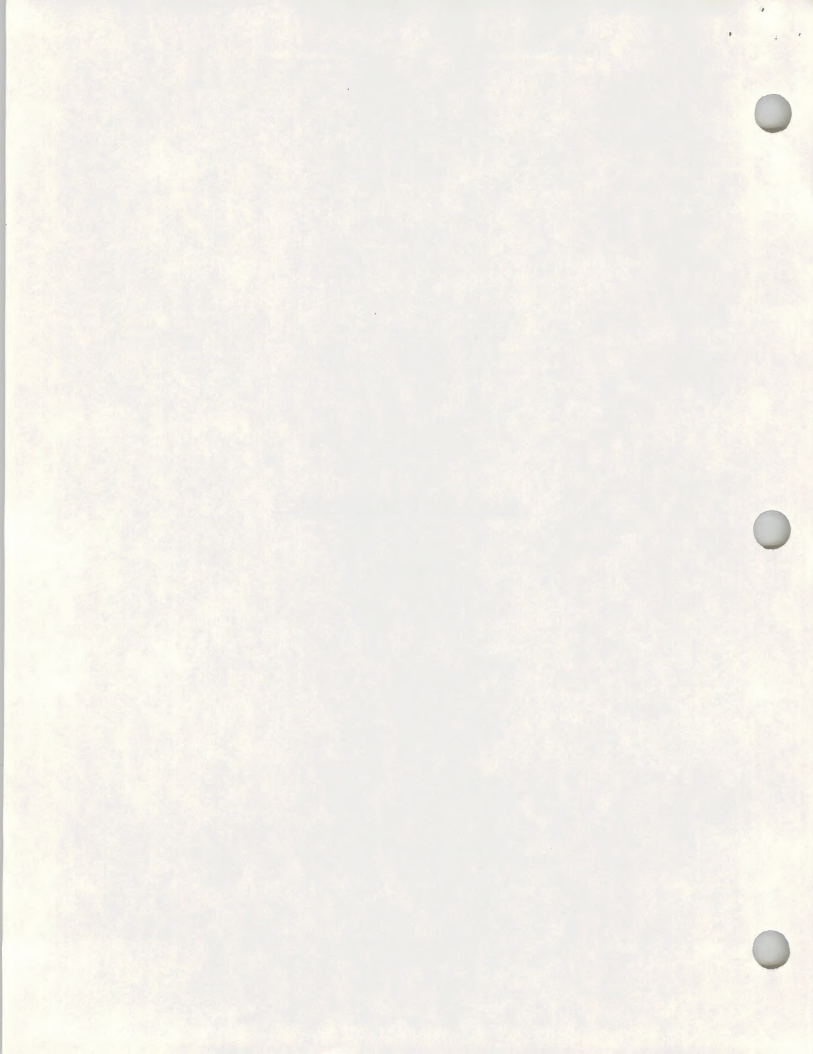
IDAHO KEY





WSA - SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

CHALLIS



CHALLIS

Corral-Horse Basin WSA 46-11

<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Preliminary Suitable Acres</u>	<u>Nonsuitable Acres</u>
48,500	0	48,500

A. General Description

WSA 46-11 is located in Custer County, Idaho, 20 miles south of Challis, in the East Fork Salmon River drainage. The Spar Canyon, Dry Gulch, East Fork and Road Creek roads roughly outline the WSA boundaries.

Topographically, the WSA is composed of rolling hills surrounding Corral and Horse Basins. Dominant vegetation is sagebrush and grass with stringers of timber in stream bottoms. One large patch of timber lies on the east slope of Anderson Peak, the WSA's highest point. Water resources are limited to small creeks and small stock reservoirs.

B. Wilderness Values

WSA 46-11's size of 48,500 acres is substantially larger than the 5,000 acres minimum size requirement. The WSA stands as an individual area not dependent on adjacent lands for size integrity.

The WSA presents the visitor with a general appearance of naturalness. As a whole, the area is not particularly distinguishable from the lands around it; however, lands to the north, east, and west show the imprints of man more than WSA 46-11.

The majority of the human imprints are fences and waterholes associated with range management activities. The fences tend to blend into the natural landscape when viewed from more than $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile. They present a minor barrier and an obvious human imprint when contacted directly.

Most of the waterholes and spring developments are so old that they appear to be natural features. Imprints exist in the form of jeep trails used as access to springs, water troughs, and pipelines for maintenance checks. The Broken Wagon Road (unimproved vehicle way) is the most significant single impact.

The horse trap at Anderson Ranch is the only significant outside activity which impacts the WSA. The wing fences and runways extend from the trap into the WSA.

No particular area in the WSA is subject to a concentration of imprints as they are dispersed throughout. All of the existing impacts, including the Broken Wagon Road, will rehabilitate themselves naturally if vehicles are removed from the area.

The overall influence of human imprints on the naturalness of the area is minimal due to the wide dispersal of low impact developments.

The WSA offers solitude primarily due to its large size. The solitude is not rated as outstanding.

The unit's topography is characterized by low rolling ridges separating wide interior basins. Vegetation is primarily sagebrush and grass; therefore, topographic and vegetative screening is not of particularly good quality.

Outside sights and sounds are present in the form of bordering roads and private ranches. These are not significantly imposing but they do lessen the feeling of solitude.

This WSA has outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation due to size, a lack of man-made or natural barriers, and the absence of developments in or near the area. Possible activities include hiking, backpacking, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, photography, bird watching, or sightseeing.

The WSA lacks any significant feature which would be a focal or destination point for visitors.

The WSA is part of the Challis Wild Horse Range and offers excellent wild horse viewing. The horses add to a feeling of wildness in the area.

C. Energy and Minerals

Little is known about energy or mineral resource values in this WSA due to a thick cap of overlying volcanics and a lack of evidence of exploration activities. Past BLM or USGS reports or ongoing USGS studies have not identified the positive existence of energy and mineral resources.

The proximity of known mineral resources is evidenced by the Livingston Mine (lead and silver), the Clayton Silver Mine and the Cyprus Molybdenum Mine. Industry comments have indicated a potential for copper, gold, molybdenum or uranium if the surrounding mineral deposits continue into the WSA under the volcanic cap.

With the exception of about 400 acres on its western edge, the WSA is covered by oil and gas leases. All of these leases are post-FLPMA leases and have no grandfathered uses. No surface disturbing activities have as yet occurred on any of the leases. One lessee has indicated that vibroseis seismic work in areas adjacent to the WSA shows that conditions exist for the possible accumulation of hydrocarbons.

D. Manageability

WSA 46-11 could be managed as a wilderness area. However, due to the numerous vehicle access points and gentle terrain, many miles of fence, signing and constant patrolling would be necessary to effectively eliminate vehicle use. While present vehicle use is not a management problem in a nonwilderness environment, it would be a significant problem to a designated wilderness.

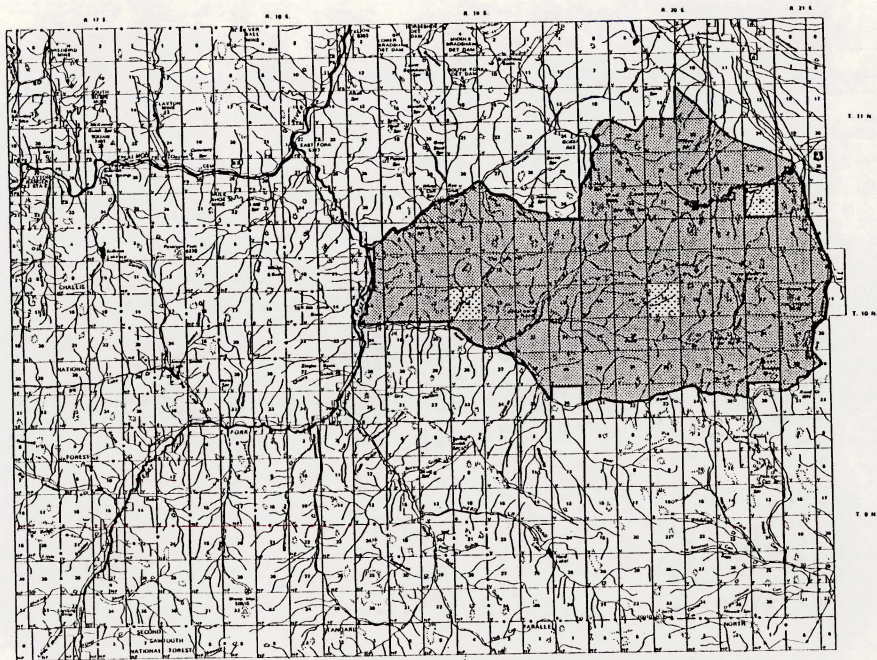
Acquisition of 2,895 acres of State and 102 acres of private lands bordering or included in the WSA would be required to effectively manage the area, and to establish more logical boundary lines. Access disputes concerning included lands would be avoided.

E. Public Comments

Nineteen of the comments received during the Draft EIS comment period or at the public hearing specifically mentioned WSA 46-11. Seven commentors supported the draft's recommendation of nonsuitable. Of these seven, four simply agreed with the recommendation, one noted existing vehicle/recreation use, one cited too much existing wilderness in Idaho and one noted potential energy and mineral resources. Three other comments recommended a no action alternative or additional study of the energy and mineral resource values. These are considered as additional no wilderness comments.

Nine commentors urged the BLM to review the no wilderness recommendation and change it to a wilderness recommendation. These commentors felt that the solitude was outstanding and that important wildlife and recreational values would be protected.

One government agency comment specifically mentioned WSA 46-11. The Soil Conservation Service agreed with the nonsuitable recommendation.



CORRAL HORSE BASIN WSA 46-11

— WSA BOUNDARY
 [Cross-hatch pattern] UNSUITABLE
 [None pattern] PRELIMINARY SUITABLE
 [Dotted pattern] STATE/PRIVATE LAND

V - PUBLIC LAND
 S - STATE LAND
 P - PATENTED (PRIVATE) LAND
 NF - NATIONAL FOREST LAND

Challis
Jerry Peak WSA (46-14)

<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Preliminary Suitable Acres</u>	<u>NonSuitable Acres</u>
46,150	26,750	19,400

A. General Description

WSA 46-14 is located in Custer County, Idaho, 20 miles south of Challis, in the East Fork Salmon River drainage.

The East Fork, Road Creek, and Pecks Canyon Roads and the Challis National Forest roughly outline the WSA boundaries.

The northern half of the WSA is characterized by rolling hills with sagebrush and grass the dominant vegetation. The southern half of the WSA consists of steeper terrain of a more mountainous nature. Sagebrush and grass give way to lodgepole and limber pine. Large areas of timber occur in the upper reaches of Bear, Mosquito, Sage, and Lake Creeks. Herd Lake is a focal point for both fishing and sightseeing in the WSA.

B. Wilderness Values

WSA 46-14's size of 46,150 acres is substantially larger than the 5,000 acres minimum size requirement. The WSA stands as an individual area not dependent on adjacent lands for size integrity. The WSA would be enhanced by combining it with RARE II Area 04-551 White Cloud-Boulder to the south. At present, these two areas are separated by a four-mile wide strip of Challis National Forest. This strip is roadless in nature but was not included in the wilderness study areas designated in the Pioneer Mountains Land Use Plan (Challis National Forest).

WSA 46-14 presents a general appearance of naturalness. The WSA represents a transition from low elevation sagebrush/grass ecosystems to high elevation conifer forest ecosystems.

Imprints exist due to fences and spring developments associated with range management activities, access roads and jeep trails. The range improvements tend to be small scale, blending into the natural landscape. The four roads which deadend in the unit (the Herd Lake, Mosquito Creek, Sage Creek, and Bradshaw Creek Roads) while technically not a part of the WSA do influence the naturalness of the WSA immediately adjacent to the roads.

No particular area in the WSA contains a concentration of imprints as they are dispersed throughout the WSA. The center of the WSA between the North Fork Sage Creek and Mosquito Creek roads contains fewer imprints than do the eastern and western edges of the WSA. All of the existing imprints could rehabilitate naturally if vehicles were removed from the area.

The overall influence of human imprints on the naturalness of the area, as perceived by the visitor, is minimal due to the wide dispersal of low impact developments.

The area presents an outstanding opportunity for solitude especially in the Bear Creek and Lake Creek drainages. Topography of these areas is characterized by numerous steep canyons and creek drainages. Vegetative screening, especially in the east half of the WSA, further enhances the opportunities for solitude. Other than the boundary gravel roads and one small ranch the sights and sounds of man are not evident.

Large tracts of undeveloped BLM lands to the north and USFS lands to the south enhance the solitude.

The intensive inventory identified this WSA as possessing outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation due to the area's size, a lack of man-made or natural barriers, and the absence of developments in or near the area. Possible activities include hiking, backpacking, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, photography, bird watching, and sightseeing.

Herd Lake is a destination point for many visitors.

Part of the WSA is in the Challis Wild Horse Range and offers excellent wild horse viewing. The horses add to the feeling of wildness in the area.

The large landslide which created Herd Lake is an unusual geologic feature which could add to visitors' appreciation of the area through interpretation.

C. Energy and Minerals

Little is known about energy or mineral resource values in this WSA due to a thick cap of overlying volcanics and a lack of any evidence of exploration activities other than surficial reconnaissance. Past BLM or USGS reports and ongoing USGS studies have not identified the positive existence of energy and mineral resources.

The proximity of known mineral resources is evidenced by the Livingston Mine (lead and silver), the Clayton Silver Mine and the Cyprus Molybdenum Mine. Industry comments have indicated a potential for copper, gold, molybdenum or uranium if the surrounding mineral deposits continued into the WSA under the volcanic cap.

With the exception of about 600 acres on its western edge, the WSA is covered by oil and gas leases. All of these leases are post-FLPMA leases and have no grandfather uses. No surface disturbing activities have as yet occurred on any of the leases. One lessee has indicated that vibroseis seismic work in areas adjacent to the WSA indicated that conditions exist for the possible accumulation of hydrocarbons.

D. Manageability

WSA 46-14 could be managed as a wilderness area. Some miles of fence, signing and patrolling would be necessary to effectively eliminate vehicle use. While present vehicle use is not a management problem in a nonwilderness environment, it would be a significant problem to a designated wilderness.

Acquisition of some State lands bordering or included in the WSA would be required to effectively manage the area, and establish more logical boundary lines. Access disputes concerning included lands would be avoided.

E. Public Comments

Twenty-four of the comments received during the Draft EIS comment period or at the public hearing specifically mentioned WSA 46-14. The Draft EIS recommended all of WSA 46-14 as suitable while the PFEIS now recommends 26,750 acres as suitable and 19,400 acres as nonsuitable. Sixteen comments supported the suitable recommendation. Five commentors were opposed to a suitable wilderness recommendation. Four of these comments stated that Idaho had enough existing wilderness and one comment noted the potential for energy and mineral resources. Three other comments recommended a no action alternative or additional study of the mineral resource values. These are considered as additional no wilderness comments.

Three government agency comments mentioned WSA 46-14. The Soil Conservation Service disagreed with the suitable recommendation stating that it appeared to be a vehicle restriction designation in the form of wilderness. The State of Idaho, Department of Lands, expressed a desire to exchange State land that would be affected by a wilderness designation. The State of Idaho, Department of Health and Welfare, concurred with the recommendation on the basis of water quality benefits to tributaries of a special resource water.

Challis
Jerry Peak West WSA (46-14a)

<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Preliminary Suitable Acres</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>
13,530	0	13,530

A. General Description

WSA 46-14a is located in Custer County, Idaho, 20 miles south of Challis, in the East Fork Salmon River drainage.

The WSA is the foothills of Sheep Mountain (in the Challis NF) and extends from the banks of the East Fork Salmon River up into the forested areas above moderately steep sagebrush and grass covered hills.

The WSA is roughly bounded by the East Fork Salmon River, Herd Creek and the Challis National Forest.

B. Wilderness Values

WSA 46-14a contains 13,530 acres of BLM lands. The WSA would be enhanced by combining it with RARE II Area 04-551 White Cloud-Boulder to the south. At present, these two areas are separated by a two mile wide strip of Challis National Forest. This strip is roadless in nature but was not included in the wilderness study areas designated in the Pioneer Mountains Land Use Plan (Challis National Forest).

WSA 46-14a presents a general appearance of naturalness. The WSA represents a transition from lower elevation sagebrush/grass ecosystems to high elevation conifer forest ecosystems.

Imprints exist due to fences and spring developments associated with range management activities. The range improvements tend to be small scale, blending into the natural landscape. No particular area is subject to a concentration of imprints as they are dispersed throughout the WSA.

The overall influence of human imprints the naturalness of the area is minimal due to the wide dispersal of low impact developments.

The WSA presents an outstanding opportunity for solitude. Topography of the area is characterized by numerous steep canyons and creek drainages. Vegetative screening further enhances the opportunities for solitude.

Other than the boundary gravel roads and small ranches, the sights and sounds of man are not evident. These outside sights and sounds are not significantly imposing but they do lessen the feeling of solitude.

The WSA possesses outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation due to its lack of man-made or natural barriers, and the absence of developments in or near the area. Possible activities include hiking, backpacking, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, cross country-skiing, showshoeing, photography, bird watching, or sightseeing.

The WSA lacks any significant feature which would be a focal or destination point for visitors.

C. Energy and Minerals

Little is known about energy or mineral resource values in this WSA due to a thick cap of overlying volcanics and a lack of any evidence of exploration activities other than surficial reconnaissance. Past BLM or USGS reports and ongoing USGS studies have not identified the positive existence of energy and mineral resources.

The proximity of known mineral resources is evidenced by the Livingston Mine (lead and silver), the Clayton Silver Mine and the Cyprus Molybdenum Mine. Industry comments have indicated a potential for copper, gold, molybdenum or uranium if the surrounding mineral deposits continued into the WSA under the volcanic cap.

Oil and gas leases cover 1,900 acres on the western edge of the WSA. These leases are post-FLPMA leases and have no grandfather uses. No surface disturbing activities have as yet occurred on any of the leases. One lessee has indicated that vibroseis seismic work in areas adjacent to the WSA shows that conditions exist for the possible accumulation of hydrocarbons.

D. Manageability

WSA 46-14a could be managed as wilderness in terms of access and existing imprints. No impacts to the natural environment exist other than a few minor developments. Access by vehicle is virtually non-existent and is controlled by private landowners along the East Fork of the Salmon River. Cooperative agreements with the private landowners could be adequate to control or allow access. Few, if any, control fences would be required.

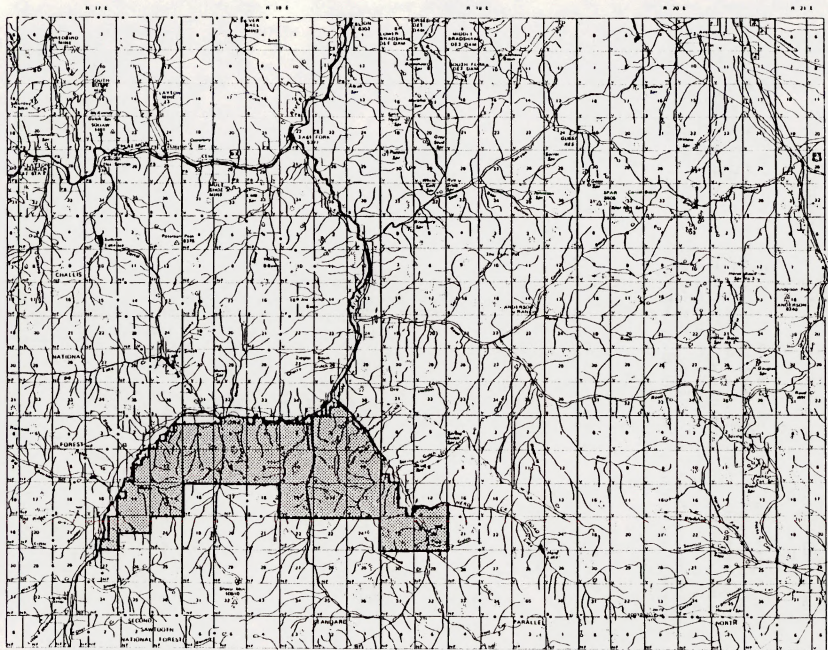
It would be quite difficult to maintain the integrity of the area as wilderness due to its long relatively narrow shape and the encircling non-wilderness lands. Its narrow shape makes it very susceptible to outside influences. Future use of and access into surrounding Forest Service and private lands could significantly restrict the ability to retain wilderness values in this area.

E. Public Comments

Twenty-three of the comments received during the Draft EIS comment period or at the public hearing specifically mentioned WSA 46-14a. The Draft EIS recommended all of WSA 46-14a as suitable while the PFEIS recommends the area as nonsuitable. Sixteen comments supported the suitable wilderness recommendation stating that Idaho had enough existing wilderness. Three

comments recommended a no action alternative or additional study of the energy and mineral resource values. These are considered as additional no wilderness comments.

Three government agency comments mentioned WSA 46-14a. The Soil Conservation Service disagreed with the suitable recommendation stating that it appeared to be a vehicle restriction designation in the form of wilderness. The State of Idaho, Department of Lands, expressed a desire to exchange State land that would be affected by a wilderness designation. The State of Idaho, Department of Health and Welfare, concurred with the recommendation on the basis of water quality benefits to tributaries of a special resource water.



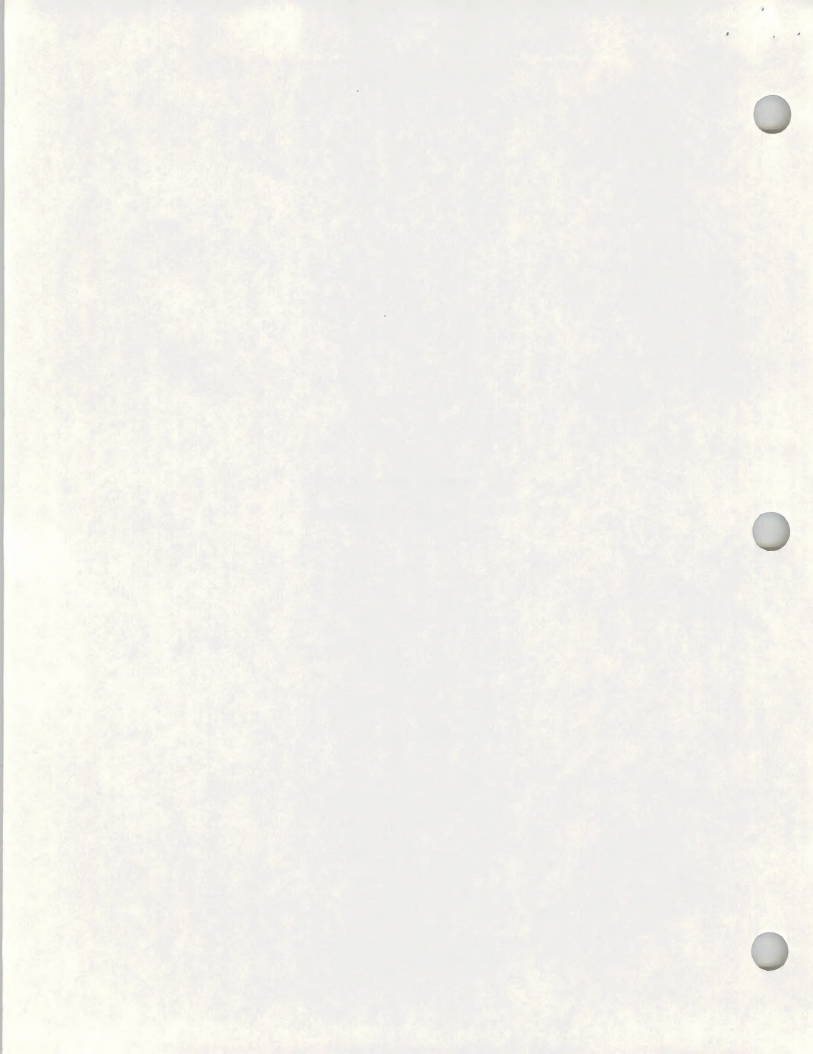
JERRY PEAK WEST WSA 46-14a

— WSA BOUNDARY
 [Shaded Box] NONSUITABLE
 [Dashed Box] PRELIMINARY SUITABLE
 [Solid Box] STATE / PRIVATE LAND

V - PUBLIC LAND
 S - STATE LAND
 P - PATENTED (PRIVATE) LAND
 NF - NATIONAL FOREST LAND

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS
OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

CHALLIS



CHALLIS WILDERNESS STUDY

Summary and Analysis of
Public Hearing Record
Bureau of Land Management
Idaho

October 1982

A public hearing announcement was published in the Federal Register on May 21, 1982. Written notification of the hearing and information on the study were sent to Governor Evans of Idaho; U.S. Senators James McClure and Steve Symms; U.S. Representatives George Hanson and Larry Craig; three members of the Idaho State Legislature; twenty-four Federal departments, agencies or offices; fifteen Idaho State officials and agencies; nine local officials and agencies; and numerous individuals and organizations.

The hearing was held in Challis, Idaho on June 30, 1982. Seven people presented oral testimony at the hearing, and additional comments were submitted by mail.

1. Public Hearing

The hearing officer was Joseph Zimmer, BLM Boise District Manager, Boise, Idaho. The BLM was represented by Jerry Goodman, Acting Salmon District Manager, Salmon District; Don Smith, Challis Area Manager, Salmon District; and Dave Wolf, Wilderness Coordinator, Salmon District.

Seven people testified at the hearing. Of these, none supported the BLM's proposed recommendations; six opposed the BLM's proposed recommendations and urged no wilderness in Idaho; and one opposed the BLM's proposed recommendation for WSA 46-14 based on energy and mineral potential.

The following spoke on behalf of organizations opposing the BLM's proposed recommendations: Gary Ingram, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation and Custer County Farm Bureau; and Garth Chivers, Idaho Cattlemen's Association, Tri-County Cattlemen and the Challis Soil Conservation District.

The following spoke as individuals opposing the BLM's proposed recommendations: Fred Brinkman, Garth Chivers, Calvin Helm, Tom Chivers, Ben Howard and Betty Baker.

No elected officials or representatives of local, state or Federal agencies and departments testified.

2. Communications From Elected Officials

No communications were received.

3. Communications From State and Local Officials, Departments and Agencies

Two communications were received from State of Idaho Departments. Of these, one took no position, while one supported the BLM's proposed recommendations.

A communication from the Idaho Department of Lands took no position but did restate the state's concern for State Endowment Lands which might be contained in or contiguous to any designated wilderness.

A communications from Idaho Department of Health and Welfare concurred with the proposal to designate WSAs 46-14 and 46-14a as wilderness on the basis of water quality benefits to tributaries of a special resource water.

4. Communications From Federal Officials, Departments and Agencies

Six letters were received from Federal agencies. Five took no position, while one opposed wilderness recommendations for WSAs 46-14 and 46-14a.

Communications from the Environmental Protection Agency, National Park Service (USDI), Minerals Management Service (USDI), Public Health Service (USDHHS), and Bureau of Indian Affairs (USDI) took no position. A letter from the Soil Conservation Service State Conservationist suggested that a multiple-use plan with vehicle restrictions would be preferable to wilderness.

5. Communications From Organizations

Letters were received from eight organizations. None agreed with the BLM's recommendations; one favored wilderness for all WSAs; two agreed with wilderness recommendations for WSAs 46-14 and 46-14a and requested a wilderness recommendation for all or part of WSA 46-11; and five organizations opposed BLM's recommendations.

The EARTH FIRST! organization favored the All Wilderness Alternative. Organizations favoring designation of all or part of WSA 46-11 as well were the Wilderness Society and the Committee for Idaho's High Desert.

Organizations opposing BLM's recommendations and favoring the No Wilderness Alternative were: Conoco, Inc.; Noranda Exploration, Inc.; Atlantic Richfield Company; the Minerals Exploration Coalition; and Mike Mogenson, Idaho Cattlemen's Association.

6. Communications From Citizens

Fifteen letters were received from citizens. Two concurred with the BLM's proposed recommendations; four concurred with proposed wilderness recommendations for WSAs 46-14 and 46-14a but made no mention of WSA 46-11; six letters favored the All Wilderness Alternative; two disagreed with BLM's proposed recommendations and opposed any wilderness designation; and one letter supported no wilderness for WSA 46-11 but made no mention of WSAs 46-14 and 46-14a.

7. Summary and Analysis

Of the total 38 written and oral communications received for the record, two supported BLM's proposed recommendations, 8 appeared to support BLM's recommendations (agreed with BLM on one of two WSAs but did not mention the other WSA(s)), eight favored wilderness designation for all the WSAs, fourteen opposed any wilderness designation, and six took no position.

Those supporting BLM's proposed recommendation usually simply restated the Draft EIS findings and stated their agreement.

Most of those favoring the all wilderness recommendation felt that WSA 46-11 did offer outstanding opportunities for solitude and wilderness. designation would protect wildlife and recreational values.

Those opposing any wilderness designation believed that Idaho simply has enough wilderness, that the areas do exhibit significant impacts of man's activities or that non-wilderness multiple-use management would be as effective and less costly than a wilderness designation.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

NORTH IDAHO



TABLE 2

SUMMARY TABLE - NORTH IDAHO WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

<u>WSA</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Suitable Acres</u>	<u>Nonsuitable Acres</u>
Crystal Lake (61-10)	9,027	0	9,027
Grandmother Mountain (61-15)	17,129	0	17,129
Snowhole Rapids (62-1)	5,068	0	5,068
Marshall Mountain (62-10)	5,804	0	5,804
Totals	37,028	0	37,028

Location

The four North Idaho WSAs are located in the panhandle of northern Idaho, an area extending from the Canadian border on the north to the Payette National Forest on the south. Two of the WSAs (Crystal Lake, Grandmother Mountain) are located in the Emerald Empire Resource Area, the other two (Snowhole Rapids, Marshall Mountain) are in the Cottonwood Resource Area, all in the Coeur d'Alene District.

Public Comment Summary

The public comment period for the North Idaho Draft EIS ran from June 18 to August 30, 1983. During this review period, public meetings were held in Grangeville, St. Maries, and Moscow. On July 29 a formal public hearing was held in Coeur d'Alene. Of the 52 people who attended the public meetings, 25 presented oral comments. Almost all of these commenters submitted written comments also. At the public hearing, 14 people were in attendance with 6 presenting oral testimony. During the review period 79 written comment letters were received.

Of the 79 written comment letters, 34 generally favored wilderness designation of the WSAs, 31 generally opposed wilderness designation of the WSAs, 6 opposed any wilderness designation anywhere, and 9 took no position.

COMMENTS RECEIVED SUPPORTING THE MAJOR ALTERNATIVES

WSA	All Wilderness	No Action	No Wilderness	Partial Wilderness
Crystal Lake	33	1	32	--
Grandmother Mountain	47	1	37	4
Snowhole Rapids	19	4	8	--
Marshall Mountain	4	7	20	--

Note: The preferred alternative for the four WSAs is No Wilderness. Nine commenters expressed no opinion.

Comments from the Public Meetings and Hearing

Grangeville - Those who presented oral comments at this meeting were mainly concerned with the Marshall Mountain and Snowhole Rapids WSAs. A number of speakers stated that they were miners and opposed any attempts to constrain the pursuit of their occupation, especially in the Marshall Mountain area. They indicated that this area is a mining district and should be left alone. Those who spoke, favored the No Action alternative for Marshall Mountain. One speaker supported the No Wilderness alternative for Snowhole Rapids.

St. Maries - This meeting was attended mainly by loggers or representatives of timber companies. Those who spoke indicated a strong desire to see the Crystal Lake and Grandmother Mountain WSAs allocated for non-wilderness uses. While supporting the No Wilderness recommendation, most opposed any attempts by BLM or the Forest Service to constrain intensive timber management of these areas through scenic area, natural area, or research area allocations.

Two speakers expressed a desire to see more nonmotorized recreation areas developed and one speaker expressed concern about the protection of the Skitswish Monuments in the Crystal Lake WSA without wilderness designation.

Moscow - Most of the people in attendance at this meeting favored wilderness designation for the Crystal Lake and Grandmother Mountain WSAs. They felt that these areas were important since they contained some of the last unspoiled Federal lands in an area of intense timber harvesting and associated road construction. A few speakers favored natural and research area designations for these WSAs.

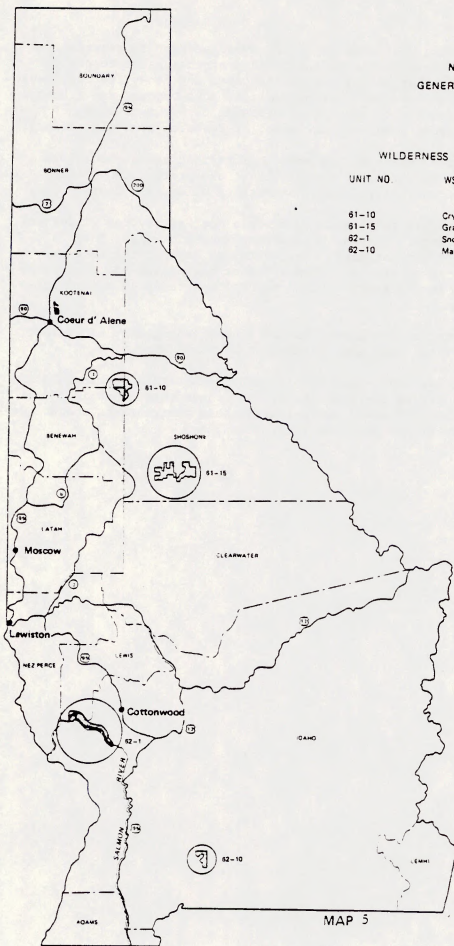
Two speakers represented timber interests and opposed any timber management constraints in the Crystal Lake and Grandmother Mountain WSAs.

Coeur d'Alene (public hearing) - Six people testified at this hearing. One speaker requested wilderness designation for the Grandmother Mountain WSA. The other five speakers favored no further wilderness designations and no further constraints on timber management for the WSAs.

NORTH IDAHO
GENERAL LOCATION MAP

WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA) UNITS

UNIT NO	WSA NAME	ACRES
61-10	Crystal Lake	9,027
61-15	Grandmother Mountain	17,129
62-1	Snowhole Rapids	5,368
62-10	Marshall Mountain	6,524
TOTAL		37,748



- UNSUITABLE WILDERNESS AREA
- PRELIMINARY SUITABLE WILDERNESS AREA
- STATE CAPITOL
- BLM DISTRICT OFFICE
- INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
- U.S. HIGHWAY
- STATE HIGHWAY
- COUNTY BOUNDARY
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY



MAP 5

WSA - SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

NORTH IDAHO

North Idaho
Crystal Lake WSA (61-10)

<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Preliminary Suitable Acres</u>	<u>Nonsuitable Acres</u>
9,027	0	9,027

A. General Description

The Crystal Lake WSA is located 10 miles northeast of St. Maries, Idaho. The WSA contains a landscape of varied character. Bare talus peaks descend sharply to Latour Creek some 3,000 feet below Reeds Baldy, the highest peak in the WSA. The slopes in the upper drainages are predominately vegetated with a thin to moderately stocked mixed coniferous stand. Toward the lower end of the WSA, the density of this stand steadily increases.

The WSA contains the major portion of the Latour Creek drainage including its headwaters at Crystal Lake. Bare areas of talus material are common in the upper end of the drainage. The basin below Crystal Lake contains the site of a past fire and now supports a dense brush cover.

B. Wilderness Values

The unit is in an essentially natural state. One way stretches for 1.5 miles in the extreme eastern portion of the WSA, and is now overgrown and impassable. Natural revegetation has reduced the visual impacts, though it does not significantly limit the way's visibility.

The southern portion of the WSA contains Crystal Lake. Crystal Lake receives most of the use within the WSA. Reeds Baldy, a prominent peak, is also located here. These two features, along with ease of access, serve to make this area the focal point of use in the Crystal Lake WSA.

This WSA is vulnerable to management practices on adjacent non-BLM land. This is particularly significant outside of the northwest portion of the area where an intermingled pattern of state and private land exists. Timber harvest and other land-altering activities are visible from many portions of the WSA. Depending upon the intensity of future actions, the effect may be significant upon user perceptions of naturalness. This same situation exists to the south and west of the WSA with a less significant impact.

Under conditions of moderate and dispersed use, the heavily forested areas (approximately 3,700 acres) within the WSA provide an outstanding opportunity for solitude due to vegetative screening. The trend of increased visitor use would make it more difficult for visitors to isolate themselves from the sights and sounds of others due to the relative small size of the WSA and limited vegetative and topographic screening.

Activities on adjacent lands could diminish outstanding opportunities for solitude available to users in the Crystal Lake WSA.

The WSA offers a diversity of possible recreation activities. The more prominent among these are fishing, cross-country skiing, hiking, hunting, and nature study.

The range of landform and vegetation, from bare peaks to heavily forested creek bottoms, provides a broad base which can meet the needs of these varied activities. Fishing opportunities include both stream and lake. Cross-country skiing within the WSA accommodates a wide range of skill levels. The variety of environments maintain visual interest for both the hiker and those involved in nature study.

The Crystal Lake WSA contains the Skitswish Monuments which have both cultural and educational values. These Monuments are associated with the religious ceremonies of the Coeur d'Alene Indians.

C. Energy and Minerals

No known energy or mineral resource values exist in this WSA. There are no mining claims, leases, or pending applications for leasable minerals. Undiscovered resources of mineral-bearing material (silver, lead, zinc, copper, etc.) may exist in this WSA on the basis of broad geologic knowledge and theory.

D. Manageability

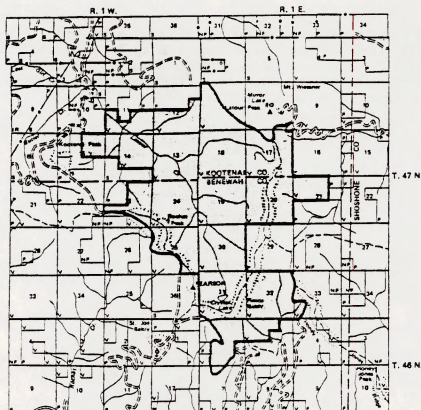
If the current levels of use within this WSA were maintained and if current levels of activity on adjacent non-BLM lands were to continue, the Crystal Lake WSA could be effectively managed as a wilderness area. However, two factors would adversely affect BLM's ability to effectively manage this WSA as wilderness in the long-term. First, usage of this WSA is increasing by about five percent each year. These increases will reduce user perceptions of naturalness and affect outstanding opportunities for solitude since adequate topographic and vegetative screening is not available to isolate users from the sights and sounds of others. Secondly, activity on adjacent non-BLM lands is increasing. This increase in activity is most evident on those state and private lands northwest of the WSA where timber harvest activities are occurring. Long range plans for these adjacent lands indicate that non-complementary activities will increase in the future.

Management activities on BLM lands could be designed to control the problems associated with increased usage, however, actions on adjacent lands are not under the control of BLM even though they adversely affect the wilderness characteristics in this WSA.

E. Public Comment

Written comments relative to the WSA were received in response to review of the MFP Amendment/EIS. Oral comments were received at the public meetings and formal public hearing. Of the 66 respondents who specifically commented on the WSA (either in writing or orally), 33 favored wilderness designation regardless of the area. Three people mentioned the WSA in testimony at the public hearing. All three favored no wilderness. BN Timberlands Inc. has proposed a land exchange to dispose of their lands which border the WSA.

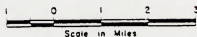
Three government agencies submitted written comments. The Bureau of Indian Affairs urged continued coordination with local Indian tribes, and the State of Idaho Department of Lands expressed an opinion concerning future land use allocations within the WSA. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game supports the recommended alternative for the WSA.



CRYSTAL LAKE - WSA 61-10

	WSA BOUNDARY
	NONSUITABLE
	PRELIMINARY SUITABLE
	STATE/PRIVATE LAND
	NATIONAL FOREST LAND

V - PUBLIC LAND
 S - STATE LAND
 P - PATENTED (PRIVATE) LAND
 NF - NATIONAL FOREST LAND



North Idaho
Grandmother Mountain WSA (61-15)

<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Preliminary Suitable Acres</u>	<u>Nonsuitable Acres</u>
17,129	0	17,129

A. General Description

The Grandmother Mountain WSA is located 12 miles east of Clarkia, Idaho. The terrain within the WSA varies from heavily forested ranges to bare peaks. There are numerous small drainages and several high mountain lakes located throughout. Elevation ranges from 6,800 feet on Widow Mountain to 4,600 feet in the Lund Creek drainage.

B. Wilderness Values

Evidence of timber harvest is found in several locations within the WSA. Stumps are scattered throughout the area with no major concentrations in any one location. Snow-covered skid trails are visible from higher elevations due to the contrast from the more heavily forested areas. These skid trails have insignificant impact upon the natural character of the area.

Evidence of human activity outside of the WSA boundary is plentiful. These activities consist primarily of past and on-going timber sales. Clearcuts offer the most significant visual evidence. Numerous roads are also visible. Some of the impacts are visible near the WSA boundaries and from most peaks and ridges. Views of outside impacts are more widely available in the westernmost portion of the unit due to the area's narrow configuration.

Established trails within the Grandmother Mountain area are predominately found along ridgelines. Use of these trails exposes users to the presence of outside impacts. Destinations within the WSA are more likely to be located off the ridges where these impacts are largely unnoticeable.

Visitors to this WSA spend more time at destinations than on travel routes. This indicates that outside impacts, though at times visible, may not play a significant role in user perceptions of naturalness in the majority of the WSA. Within the westernmost portion of the unit, these impacts may be more significant due to the widespread presence of outside impacts and few features which serve as destination points.

An outstanding opportunity for solitude exists in the eastern portion of the WSA. The area is heavily vegetated, and the terrain is frequently broken by small drainages. The resultant screening affords an almost unlimited opportunity for users to isolate themselves from one another. The opportunities are not dependent upon adjoining land to be considered outstanding. The effect of outside impacts upon the perception of solitude is minimal.

The western portion of the WSA is split by the ridgeline which runs north-east from Grandmother Mountain. The configuration of this portion which contains 4,540 acres, is extremely irregular and narrow due to an intermingled land ownership pattern. This situation confines users to a narrow corridor, increasing the chance of encountering others. The screening available from both topography and vegetation cannot offset the inherent limitation of this configuration.

Evidence of human imprints outside of the WSA plays a significant role in the perception of solitude in the western portion. This evidence consists primarily of timber harvests. Clearcuts offer the most visual evidence of man's occupation, though numerous roads are also visible from this area. Much of the land bordering the area has been used for timber production. This pattern of development is expected to continue and spread.

Continued outstanding opportunities for solitude on those portions of the WSA which border National Forest lands are dependent upon the management of those lands. A final management plan has not been completed for the National Forest lands in this area which essentially separates the east and west portions of the WSA.

The eastern portion offers a diversity of possible recreation activities including hiking, hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing, primitive camping, and nature and wildlife observation. The range of landform and vegetation, from bare peaks to dense forest, provides a broad base which can meet the needs of recreationists.

The variety of environments maintain visual interest for both the hiker and those involved in nature study. Hunting opportunities exist for elk, deer, moose, bear, and upland game. Fishing is available in the area's eight lakes and numerous small streams. The large amount of snow and the relatively inaccessible nature of the area during the winter provide a challenging setting for the cross-country skier.

The recreation opportunities available in the western portion are comparatively less. While the same activities may be pursued, the quality of the experience is less. Those factors which limit the quality of experience are a lack of features which would enhance primitive recreation activities, the confining configuration of the area, and the exposure of outside impacts.

Recreation opportunities within the 2,250 acres east of the ridge and along the trail running northeast from Grandmother Mountain are dependent upon the adjacent National Forest lands.

The Lund Creek drainage, 2,905 acres in the southeastern portion of the WSA, is important because of its vegetative diversity. Old growth hemlock and subalpine fir forests constitute the major interest, but equally important are the aquatic environments of wet meadows, marshes, sphagnum bogs, and streams. This area has been proposed for Research Natural Area designation by BLM, the University of Idaho, and the Idaho Natural Areas Coordinating Committee.

Another special feature is the Little North Fork of the Clearwater River, one and one-half miles of which, including its headwaters at Fish Lake, are within the Grandmother Mountain WSA. This river is currently under study for inclusion in the National River System.

C. Energy and Minerals

No known energy or mineral resource values exist in this WSA. There are no mining claims, leases, or pending applications for leasable minerals. The entire WSA has identified undiscovered resources for garnet, asbestos, refractories, and anorthosite.

D. Manageability

Most of the Grandmother Mountain WSA could be managed as wilderness. The primary exception would be the western portion of the WSA where 4,540 acres are very vulnerable to the adverse influences of land-altering activities on adjacent non-BLM lands. The irregular, narrow configuration of this unit forces visitors to use areas from which activities outside the WSA are visible. The pattern of development on the adjacent non-BLM lands is expected to continue and spread. This trend, when combined with the configuration of the western portion of the WSA, would make long-term preservation of opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation impractical.

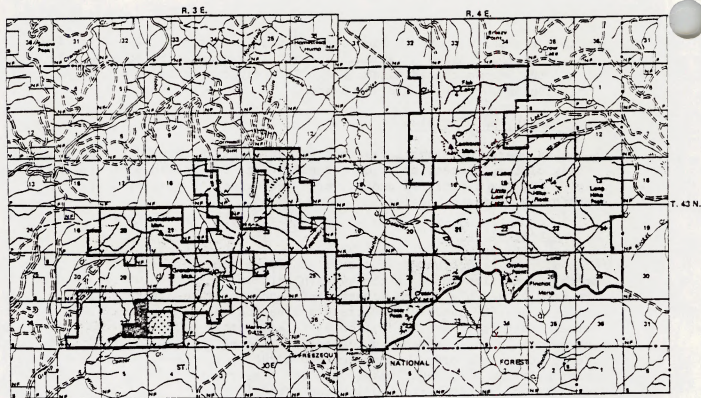
In the western portion of the WSA, approximately 2,250 acres, east of the Grandmother Mountain trail, would be dependent upon wilderness-compatible management of the adjacent National Forest lands in the Marble Creek drainage to ensure effective long-term management as wilderness.

The remainder of the WSA (10,339 acres) could be managed as wilderness without consideration of actions on adjacent lands. Compatible management of these lands would, however, enhance long-term wilderness management. Although the National Forest lands in the Marble Creek drainage have been designated non-wilderness through the RARE II process, the draft plan for the area contains at least one alternative which proposes wilderness-compatible management.

E. Public Comment

Timber companies and related interest groups are totally opposed to any further wilderness designations or any other forms of restrictive designations for the WSA. Environmental groups feel the Grandmother Mountain WSA is the last vestige of wilderness in an area of clearcuts and destruction. They feel the only real protection for this area is through wilderness designation. These two factions are very determined and vocal.

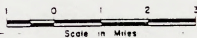
Of the 89 respondents who specifically commented on this WSA (either in writing or orally), 47 favor wilderness designation, 38 prefer no wilderness for this area, and 4 prefer partial wilderness for this WSA. Six other commenters oppose any further wilderness designations regardless of the area. All six of the speakers at the public hearing specifically mentioned this WSA. Five favored no wilderness while one favored wilderness designation. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game supports the recommended alternative for this WSA.



GRANDMOTHER MOUNTAIN - WSA 61-15

- WSA BOUNDARY
- NONSUITABLE
- PRELIMINARY SUITABLE
- STATE/PRIVATE LAND
- NATIONAL FOREST LAND

- V - PUBLIC LAND
- S - STATE LAND
- P - PATENTED (PRIVATE) LAND
- NF - NATIONAL FOREST LAND



MAP 7

North Idaho
Snowhole Rapids WSA (62-1)

<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Preliminary Suitable Acres</u>	<u>Nonsuitable Acres</u>
5,068	0	5,068

A. General Description

The Snowhole Rapids WSA is located 8 miles southwest of Cottonwood, Idaho. The WSA is approximately 20 miles in length but averages only 0.5 mile in width. Within this configuration, the Salmon River and the steep canyon walls which surround it are found. Only at Mahoney Creek, approximately midway through the area, does the WSA extend any appreciable distance from the river. At this point, the boundary extends one mile south of the river. In contrast, the WSA narrows to approximately 330 feet 1.5 miles downstream.

The canyon walls within the WSA are steep and highly broken due to erosional forces. Numerous perennial and intermittent drainages further diversify the terrain. Elevation ranges from 3,800 feet in the Mahoney Creek drainage to 1,200 feet at the Salmon River.

The vegetation within the WSA is more uniform in nature than the topography. Grasses dominate the landscape where adequate soil is present. However, scattered locations throughout the WSA do support trees, shrubs, and herbaceous species. Most of these locations are along the drainages that flow into the Salmon River. The most extensively vegetated area is found in the Mahoney Creek drainage.

B. Wilderness Values

Evidence of human activity is present throughout the WSA, largely the result of mining and domestic livestock grazing activities.

Within the WSA, there are no heavy concentrations of impacts which might impair the feeling of being in a natural environment. Whitehouse Bar contains most of the impacts within the WSA. Several old cabins are found along either side of the river. An old road, suitable only as a pack trail, extends down to the river on the south bank.

Other intrusions within the WSA consist of widely scattered, small tailings piles and small rock structures. These impacts are the result of Chinese mining activity which occurred between 1860 and 1880.

Visitor use is centered around the river and its immediate banks. Infrequent use occurs beyond this narrow corridor. From locations along the river, outside impacts along the rim of the canyon can be seen. Activities which occur on land adjacent to the WSA have had little effect on users within the area. However, anticipated increases in activity on adjacent lands could adversely impact user perceptions of naturalness within the WSA.

At current use levels, an outstanding opportunity for solitude exists within the Snowhole Rapids WSA. Primary use of the WSA is recreational activity centered around boating on the Salmon River. The river banks, where suitable, are only used for campsites or for short stops. Since visitor use is generally limited to a narrow corridor, opportunities for encountering other users increase.

The outstanding opportunity for solitude can be maintained under conditions of low and evenly distributed use. However, use on the lower Salmon River has more than tripled within the past five years. A continuation of this trend would result in diminished opportunities for solitude.

Power boat use of the river within the WSA detracts from user perceptions of solitude. To date, this use has not played a significant role in reducing the overall opportunities for solitude in this WSA; however, trends of increased use indicate that significant reductions in opportunities for solitude could result.

The Salmon River is widely recognized as an outstanding whitewater rafting river. Activities associated with river rafting may include fishing, sightseeing, and hiking.

Evidence of man's past occupation of the area is prevalent, both prehistoric as well as historic. These sites have been identified as being of National Register quality.

The Salmon River is also an important passage route for anadromous fish.

C. Energy and Minerals

No significant energy or mineral values exist in this WSA. There are no mining claims, leases, or pending applications for leasable minerals.

D. Manageability

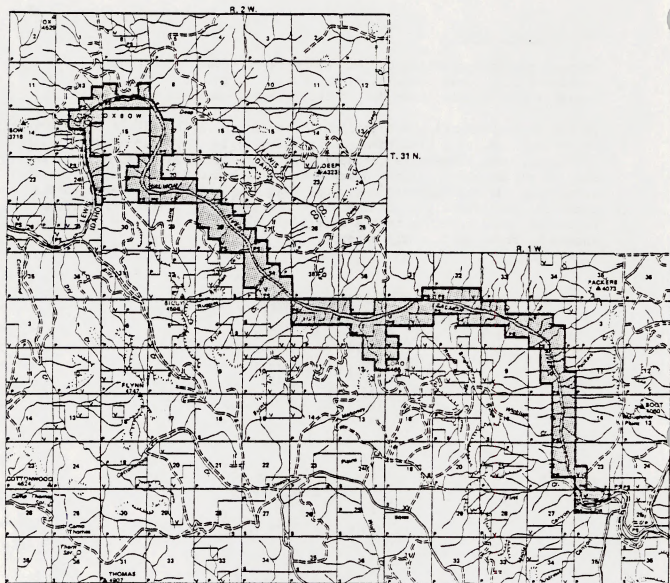
Long-term management of this WSA as wilderness would not be feasible. Increased activity on adjacent non-BLM lands would reduce the naturalness quality of this area. The opportunities for solitude would be reduced significantly if the trend of increased use of the Salmon River continues as it has since 1975.

While effective means to control wilderness value degradation through visitor use management are available for most upland wilderness areas, techniques (both indirect and direct) to minimize visitor encounters and interaction would not be practical for this WSA. This is due to a number of factors: 1) the river canyon configuration of this WSA concentrates users in a narrow corridor; 2) use of this WSA is centered around one major activity (boating and rafting); 3) topographic and vegetative screening is insufficient in the corridor of high use; 4) use of this navigable river is basically unmanaged both upstream and downstream of the WSA; and 5) power boat use of the river is an established nonconforming use that, by its very nature, intrudes upon opportunities for solitude.

E. Public Comment

Written comments relative to this WSA were received in response to the MFP Amendment/EIS. Oral comments were received at the public meetings. No comments specifically directed to this WSA were made at the public hearing.

Of the 31 respondents who specifically commented on the WSA (either in writing or orally), 19 favor wilderness designation while 12 prefer no wilderness for this area. Six commenters oppose any further wilderness designations regardless of the area. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game submitted a letter supporting the recommendation for the WSA. No other government agencies commented specifically about the WSA. The Nez Perce Indian Tribe commented that they had all rights to the waters of the Salmon River and that this WSA should be returned to their control.



SNOWHOLE RAPIDS - WSA 62-1

WSA BOUNDARY
 NONSUITABLE
 PRELIMINARY SUITABLE
 STATE / PRIVATE LAND
 NATIONAL FOREST LAND

V - PUBLIC LAND
 S - STATE LAND
 P - PATENTED (PRIVATE) LAND
 NF - NATIONAL FOREST LAND

0 1 2 3
 Scale in Miles

MAP 3

North Idaho
Marshall Mountain WSA (62-10)

<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Preliminary Suitable Acres</u>	<u>Nonsuitable Acres</u>
5,804	0	5,804

A. General Description

This WSA now contains 5,804 acres since 720 acres within the original boundary have been included in the River of No Return Wilderness Area.

The Marshall Mountain WSA is located 22 miles east of Riggins, Idaho. The topography of the Marshall Mountain WSA is mountainous and frequently broken by perennial and intermittent drainages. The land is heavily covered by a mixed-conifer forest. This forest cover is occasionally broken by talus slopes and rock outcrops. Elevation ranges from over 8,400 feet at the summit of Marshall Mountain to 3,600 feet in Long Tom Creek.

B. Wilderness Values

The Marshall Mountain WSA appears to be in an essentially natural condition. There has been extensive prospecting in the area, much of it occurring 30 to 50 years ago. However, most prospecting involved small test holes or other activities that left very little impact on naturalness.

There are a few abandoned mines and prospects scattered throughout the area, most of which have a tailings pile in the vicinity of the entrance. The impact on naturalness from these mines and prospects is very localized due to the heavy forest cover that screens them. They are definitely safety hazards.

There is a cherry-stemmed area in the Bear Creek drainage containing several active mining operations. Frequent truck travel occurs along Bear Creek Road. Heavy equipment and air compressors often accompany these mining operations. The noise of this equipment is loud and inescapable in much of the Bear Creek drainage. When in range of these noises, it is impossible for a visitor to feel alone or removed from habitations. The loss of opportunities for solitude in Bear Creek occurs in about 450 acres.

There is another active mining operation just outside the WSA boundary on National Forest land. The loss of opportunities for solitude as a result of this mine encompasses about 50 acres.

The remaining 5,304 acres of the WSA contains outstanding opportunities for solitude. The broken, mountainous landscape offers many opportunities for visitors to isolate themselves from others. Dense forests that cover much of the area effectively screen visitors from each other.

Increased mining activity, both within and outside the WSA, would adversely affect naturalness and solitude values.

The outstanding opportunity for primitive and unconfined types of recreation is centered around the unit's suitability for backcountry camping activities. Recreation opportunities include hiking, backpacking, hunting, wildlife observation, photography, and sightseeing. The diversity of these activities is considered outstanding.

This WSA is part of the historic Marshall Mountain Mining District. According to BLM records, there are two mill sites and over 150 lode mining claims within the WSA. This area also contains valuable anadromous fish habitat.

C. Energy and Minerals

According to the USGS, this area may be valuable for geothermal resources. There are no known mineral values for leasable or saleable minerals; however, the area has been classified as having identified undiscovered resources for precious metals, including gold and silver. There are numerous active mines near or adjacent to the WSA. There is a large inferred demand for mineral production or exploration within the WSA based upon the number of mining claims.

D. Manageability

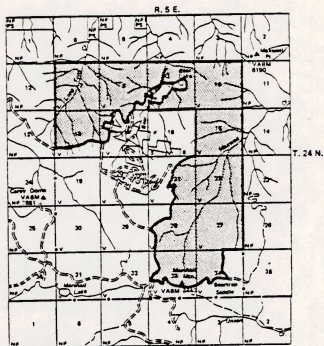
With the exception of a few small areas, the WSA could currently be managed as a wilderness area. The ability to manage the area for wilderness in the long-term is questionable. In the Marshall Mountain area, gold and other minerals have been economically mined in the past. For this reason, the WSA is saturated with mining claims (over 150). Should the price of these minerals escalate and/or new cost-effective technologies become available, it will become economically feasible for many claimants to actively pursue or resume mining operations. The impacts associated with numerous active mining operations would degrade wilderness values.

Mining activity in the vicinity of the WSA is currently depressed due to the high costs of production relative to the market value of the minerals. Should this WSA be designated a wilderness area during this time of depressed mineral development, the potential for further degradation of wilderness values would be eliminated and the area could be manageable in the long-term as wilderness.

E. Public Comment

Written comments relative to the WSA were received in response to the MFP Amendment/EIS. Oral comments were received at the public meetings. No comments specifically directed to the WSA were made at the public hearing.

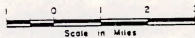
Of the 31 respondents who specifically commented on the WSA (either in writing or orally), the majority (27) favored no wilderness for this WSA while 4 indicated a preference for wilderness designation. Six commenters oppose any further wilderness designations regardless of the area. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game submitted a letter supporting the recommended alternative for the WSA. No other government agencies commented specifically about the WSA. The Nez Perce Indian Tribe commented that they had all rights to the waters of the Salmon River and that the WSA should be returned to their control.



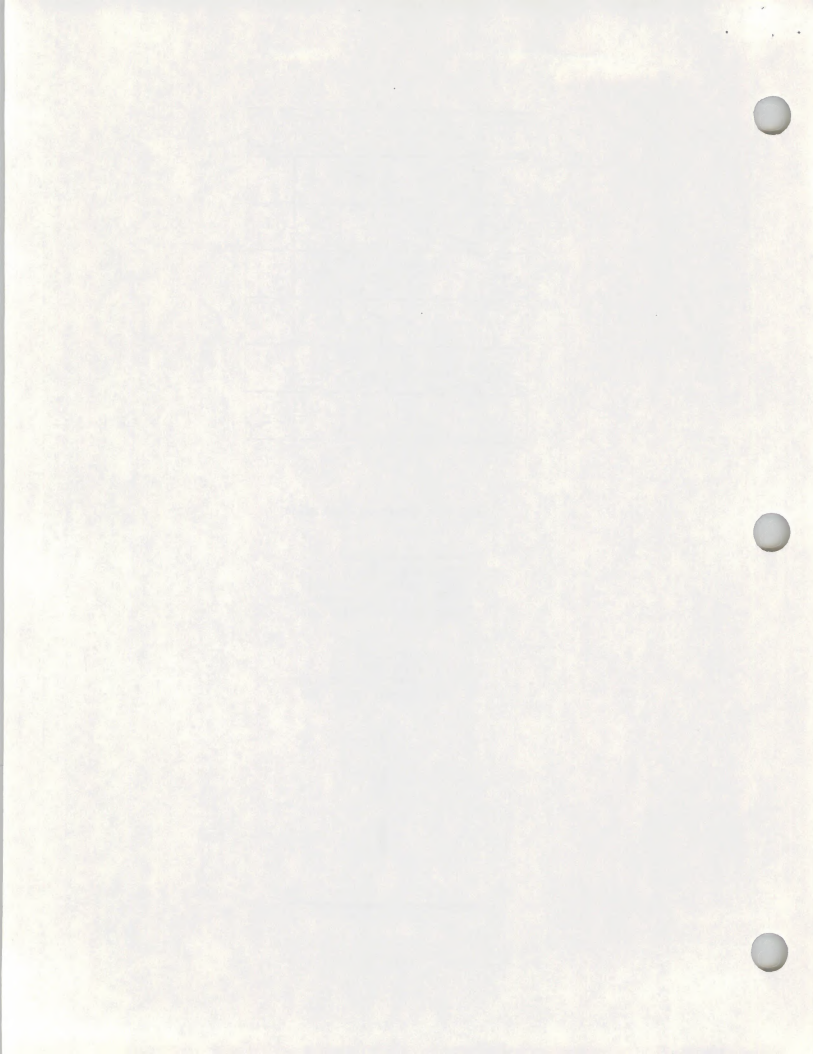
MARSHALL MOUNTAIN - WSA 62-10

	WSA BOUNDARY
	NONSUITABLE
	PRELIMINARY SUITABLE
	STATE / PRIVATE LAND
	NATIONAL FOREST LAND

V - PUBLIC LAND
 S - STATE LAND
 P - PATENTED (PRIVATE) LAND
 NF - NATIONAL FOREST LAND

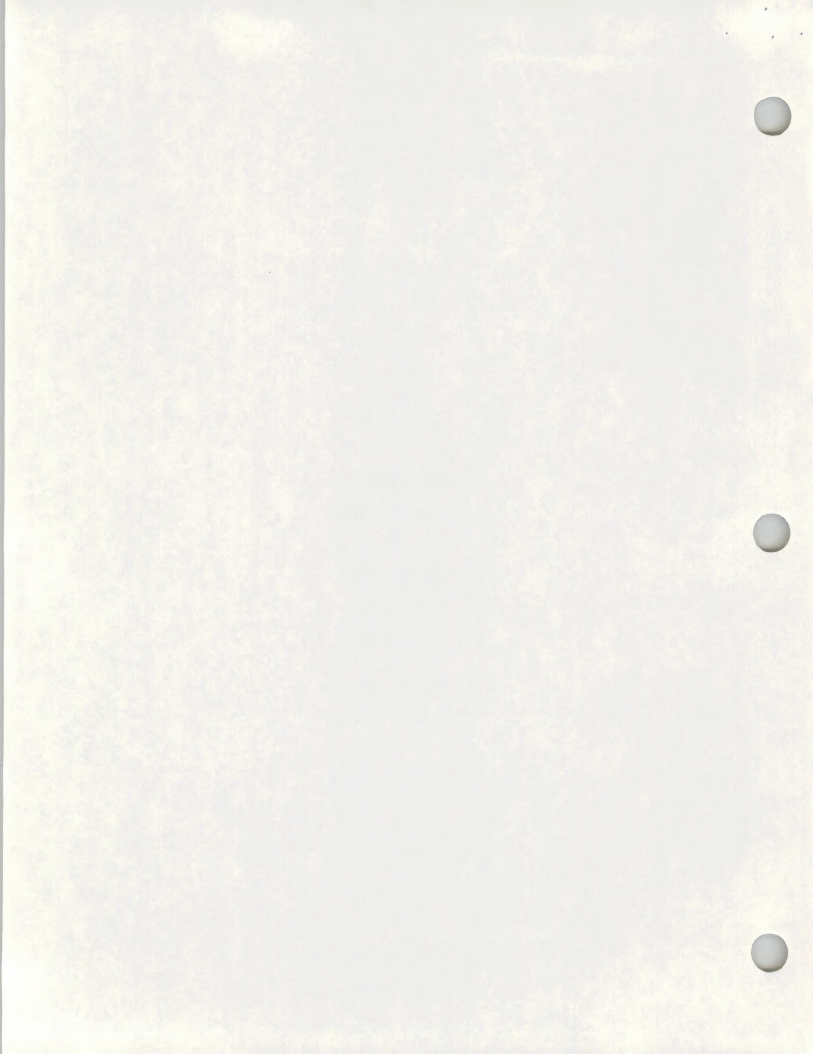


MAP 9



SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS
OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

NORTH IDAHO



NORTH IDAHO WILDERNESS STUDY

Summary and Analysis of
Public Hearing Record
Bureau of Land Management
Idaho

September 1982

Summary and Analysis of Public Hearing on the
Selkirk Crest, Crystal Lake, Grandmother Mountain,
Snowhole Rapids, and Marshall Mountain Wilderness Studies

A public hearing announcement was published in the Federal Register on June 25, 1982. Written notification of the hearing and information on the study were sent to Governor John V. Evans of Idaho; U.S. Senators James McClure and Steven Symms; U.S. Representatives George Hansen and Larry Craig; 27 members of the Idaho State Legislature; 15 Federal agencies and departments; 11 Idaho State officials and agencies; 54 local officials and agencies; and numerous individuals and organizations.

The hearing was held in Idaho at Coeur d'Alene on July 29, 1982. Six people presented oral testimony at the hearing and additional comments were submitted by mail.

1. The Public Hearing

The hearing officer was Charles Haszier, District Manager of the Shoshone District, Shoshone, Idaho. The BLM was represented by Wayne Zinne, District Manager; Ted Graf, EIS Team Leader; and Scott Forssell, Wilderness Coordinator, all from the BLM Coeur d'Alene District.

Six people testified at the hearing. Of these, five supported the BLM's nonsuitable recommendations for the Crystal Lake and Grandmother Mountain WSAs; however, they were opposed to the timber management constraints in BLM's No Wilderness preferred alternative. One speaker opposed our nonsuitable recommendation for Grandmother Mountain stating that he desired to see this WSA become a designated wilderness area. The speakers did not express opinions on the other WSAs included in the study.

No officials spoke on behalf of local, State, or Federal departments or agencies. The following spoke on behalf of organizations supporting BLM's nonsuitable recommendation for Crystal Lake and Grandmother Mountain WSAs: Don Green, St. Joe Valley Association; Bill Jonas, Diamond International Corp.; Bill Mulligan, Potlatch Corp.; Gordon Tate, Idaho State Grange; and Mike Welling, Idaho Forest Industries, Inc. Peter Wagstaff represented himself in opposing the nonsuitable recommendation for Grandmother Mountain WSA.

2. Communications from Elected Officials

No comments were received from elected officials.

3. Communications from State and Local Officials, Departments, and Agencies

Two communications were received from State departments and agencies. One communication was received from an official of the Nez Perce Indian Tribe.

Jerry M. Conley, Director of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, wrote that his agency supported BLM's recommendations for all the WSAs with the exception of Selkirk Crest. They oppose designation of the adjacent USFS RARE II unit as wilderness and, likewise, oppose our suitable recommendation for the Selkirk Crest WSA. They prefer a management plan that would emphasize diverse recreational opportunities. Gordon C. Trombley, Director of the Idaho Department of Lands, requested that 1,880 acres in the Crystal Lake WSA be excluded from any designation since the State has applied for this land under the lieu selection process. He expressed no position on the other WSAs under study.

James Lawyer, Research Data Planner for the Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho, expressed no opinion concerning wilderness suitability or nonsuitability but stated that tribal treaty rights to the Snowhole Rapids and Marshall Mountain WSAs had been violated and that these WSAs should be returned to Nez Perce Tribe.

4. Communications from Federal Officials, Departments, and Agencies

Three letters were received from Federal agencies. All three took no position on the wilderness suitability or nonsuitability of the WSAs in the study. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, Portland Area Office, stated that wilderness designations generally support the intent of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978. The National Park Service, Pacific Northwest Region, provided some suggested wording for the interrelationships section of the EIS. The Federal Highway Administration, Boise Office, wrote to request that any designations in the Selkirk Crest WSA exclude the secondary highway which passes near the northeast corner of the WSA.

5. Communications from Organizations

Letters were received from six organizations. None totally agreed with BLM's preferred alternative. Four opposed any wilderness or other designations which could constrain timber production. Two desired wilderness designation for all the WSAs.

Those which opposed wilderness or other protective designations were: International Woodworkers of America Local 3-361, St. Joe Valley Association, St. Maries Chamber of Commerce, and Wildlife Resources, Inc.

The organizations which oppose BLM's nonsuitability recommendation were: Earth First, and Idaho Environmental Council. These groups desire wilderness designation for all five WSAs.

6. Communications from Individuals

Sixty-seven written communications were received from individuals. Of this total, 31 generally agreed with BLM's proposal for a nonsuitable recommendation for four WSAs and a suitable recommendation for one WSA, the Selkirk Crest. Thirty-two respondents favored suitable wilderness recommendations for all the WSAs, 2 opposed wilderness designation anywhere, and 2 took no position.

7. Summary and Analysis

Of the 110 written and oral communications (includes 25 speakers at the public meetings and 6 at the hearing) received for the record, 48 agreed with BLM's proposal for a nonsuitable recommendation for four WSAs and a suitable recommendation for one WSA. Many of these, however, were not in agreement with BLM's proposed timber management constraints for the nonsuitable areas. Fifty-four respondents opposed BLM's proposed recommendations and requested wilderness designation for most of the WSAs, 6 opposed further wilderness designations anywhere and 2 took no position.

Most of those supporting a nonsuitable recommendation expressed their belief that Idaho already had enough designated wilderness. They felt that the economy of the local area would be drastically impacted by any further reductions in land available for commodity resource development.

Those who favored wilderness designation believed that some lands in northern Idaho should be set aside as wilderness for the following major reasons: the natural values of the WSAs require legislative designation; these areas are easily accessible to a large number of recreationists; there are currently no designated wilderness areas in northern Idaho; and the declining need for timber diminishes the economic value of these lands for timber production uses.

Those who opposed any further wilderness designations anywhere felt that sufficient wilderness currently existed in the U.S.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

OWYHEE



TABLE 3

SUMMARY TABLE - OWYHEE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

<u>WSA</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Suitable Acres</u>	<u>Nonsuitable Acres</u>
North Fork Owyhee River (16-40)	49,585 <u>1/</u>	39,745 <u>1/</u>	9,840
Big Willow Spring (16-41)	6,210	0	6,210
Squaw Creek Canyon (16-42)	10,780	0	10,780
Middle Fork Owyhee River (16-45)	14,180	0	14,180
West Fork Red Canyon (16-47)	12,970	0	12,970
Totals	93,725 <u>1/</u>	39,745 <u>1/</u>	53,980

1/ Includes 115 acres outside the WSA boundaries.

Location

The five Owyhee Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) are located in the Owyhee Resource Area of southwest Idaho. They lie 70 to 100 miles south-southwest of Boise within Owyhee County near the Idaho-Oregon border. Four of the WSAs (16-41, 16-42, 16-43, and 16-47) form the west and south slopes of Juniper Mountain. WSA 16-40 surrounds much of the headwaters of the North Fork Owyhee River.

Public Comment Summary

During the comment period for the Draft Owyhee Wilderness Plan Amendment/EIS, written comments were received from 71 individuals. An additional 26 individuals provided oral and/or written testimony at public hearings in Jordan Valley, Oregon, and Boise, Idaho, on July 7 and 8, 1982.

As the preferred alternative, the draft EIS showed all five of the WSAs as non-suitable. As a result of public comment and further analysis the preferred alternative was changed. (See Table 3.) The number of individuals commenting and their positions on wilderness in general, on the alternatives, and on major wilderness issues of concern are listed below:

Public Comment - EIS Comment Period

Number of Supporting Comments:

No Action/No Wilderness Alternative	8
All Wilderness Alternative	9
Partial Wilderness Alternative	1
For Wilderness in General	5
For Wilderness in WSA 16-40 ^{1/}	41
Against Wilderness in General	2
No Position	5
Total of Individuals Commenting	71

Public Hearing Testimony

Number of Supporting Comments:

No Action/No Wilderness Alternative	9
All Wilderness Alternative	5
For Wilderness in General	5
Against Wilderness in General	7
Total of Individuals Commenting	26

- ^{1/} Did not specifically support any of the alternatives for the North Fork Owyhee River WSA, 16-40.

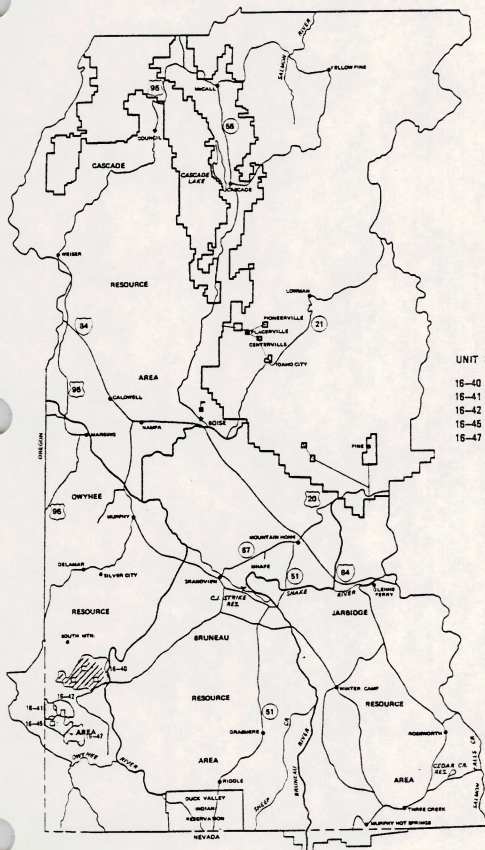
MAP 10



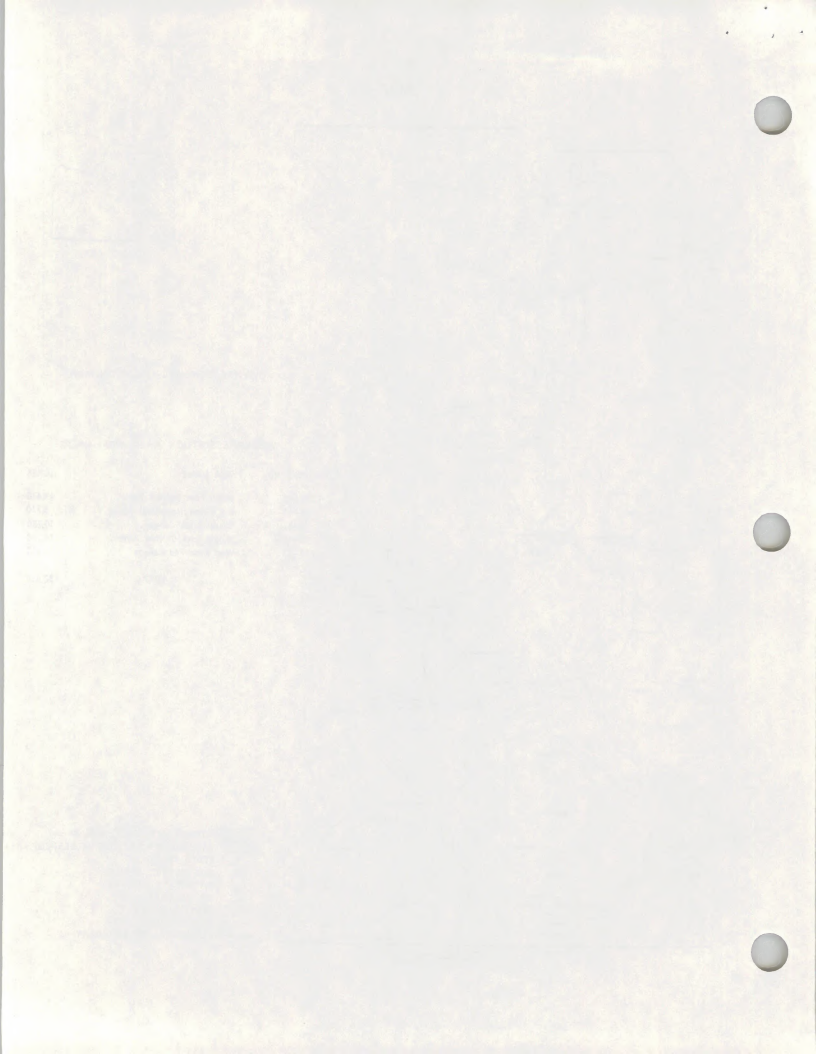
OWYHEE GENERAL LOCATION MAP

WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA) UNITS

UNIT NO.	WSA NAME	ACRES
16-40	North Fork Owyhee River	49,470
16-41	Big Willow (Horsehead) Spring	6,210
16-42	Squaw Creek Canyon	10,780
16-45	Middle Fork Owyhee River	14,180
16-47	West Fork Red Canyon	12,970
TOTAL		93,610

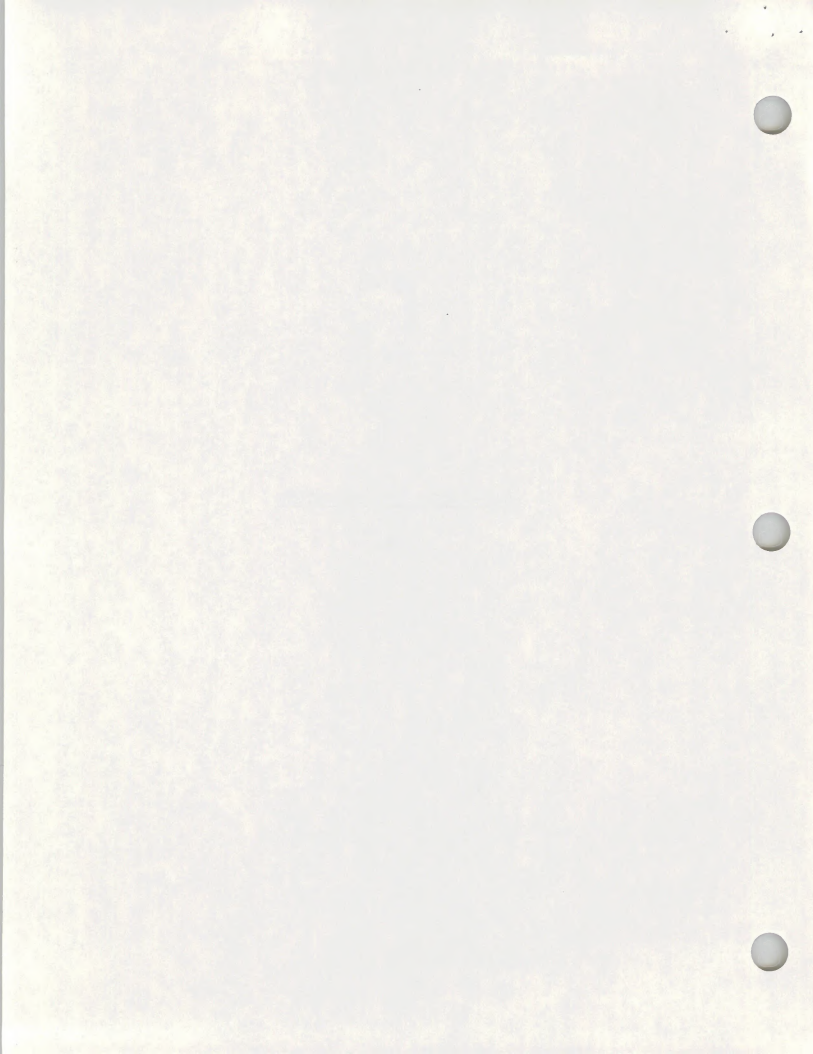


- NONSUITABLE WILDERNESS AREA
- PRELIMINARY SUITABLE WILDERNESS AREA
- STATE CAPITOL
- BLM DISTRICT OFFICE
- INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
- U.S. HIGHWAY
- STATE HIGHWAY
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- RESOURCE AREA BOUNDARY



WSA - SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

OWYHEE



Owyhee
North Fork Owyhee River WSA (16-40)

<u>Total Acres*</u>	<u>Preliminary Suitable Acres*</u>	<u>Nonsuitable Acres</u>
49,585	39,745	9,840

* Includes 115 acres of BLM land outside the WSA boundary

A. General Description

The WSA lies about 80 miles south-southwest of Boise, Idaho in Owyhee County. It is located in the southern half of the Owyhee Resource Area in the drainages of the North Fork Owyhee River several miles from the Idaho-Oregon border. There are three state section inholdings.

The WSA lies in the juniper covered hills and canyon country of the North Fork Owyhee River. Elevations range from 4,800 to 6,500 feet. The WSA is divided into three major types of topographic/vegetation areas:

- The main canyons and tributary canyons of the North Fork Owyhee River and Current Creek. These canyons are typically narrow, meandering, sheer-walled, and have well vegetated riparian zones.
- The very rugged hilly region occupying all of the northern and eastern portions of the WSA. This region, the headwaters for both the North Fork Owyhee River and Current Creek, is typified by a mosaic of rugged, barren rock outcrop areas intermixed with light to dense stands of juniper.
- The flat to gently rolling plateau region occupying most of the southern portion of the WSA. This plateau region is typified by sparse, low sagebrush and grass vegetation with scattered stands of juniper.

B. Wilderness Values

The North Fork WSA is 49,470 acres in size. Less than 2% of the area recommended as wilderness is minimally impacted by fences, small water developments, ways, and boundary roads. Under the BLM Wilderness Interim Management Policy, six new reservoirs have been developed to improve wilderness quality and protect the natural conditions of the rangeland.

The WSA's outstanding solitude opportunities are attributed to its large size and diversity of scenic, rugged landforms including deep, meandering canyons, large tracts of climax juniper and rock outcrops, and expanses of rocky sagebrush plateaus.

The WSA's outstanding primitive recreation opportunities are attributed to its large size, exceptional scenic quality and a diversity of different landforms including 30 miles of deep, sheer-walled canyons, and large expanses of climax juniper forests and sagebrush plateaus which would attract recreationists interested in backpacking, hunting, fishing, sightseeing, photography and wildlife viewing.

Large expanses of juniper within the Sagebrush-Steppe ecosystem are located in the WSA. Juniper woodland communities cover only .9% of Idaho. Although the associated sagebrush-bunchgrass communities are generally in poor condition, improved grazing management and limited vegetation treatments under wilderness management should result in a gradual improvement in condition.

The North Fork area is of exceptional scenic quality because of its spectacular sheer-walled canyons and rock outcrops highlighted with gnarled juniper, and the contrasting colors and forms of more gentle plateau landforms. The combination of moving water, colorful sheer cliffs and talus slopes, juniper trees, and blue sky combine to create a dramatic stark beauty which totally envelops the visitor. In places, reddish-brown cliffs drop several hundred feet into the stream beds. The sheer rock walls often give way to steep talus slopes covered with red rock rubble, deep green junipers, and subdued green and yellow sagebrush and grasses. Surrounding the canyons are the contrasting colors and more gentle topography of sagebrush plateau landforms.

C. Energy and Minerals

There are no known energy or mineral resources. There are no mining claims in the WSA. No leasing for oil and gas exploration has occurred in the WSA. Since a preliminary suitable recommendation is being made for the North Fork WSA, a more detailed mineral survey will be conducted by the Geological Survey and Bureau of Mines before a final determination of mineral conflict is incorporated into the decision making process.

D. Manageability

The North Fork WSA could be managed in the long term as designated wilderness to protect its wilderness characteristics if relatively small adjustments in the boundaries occurred. These adjustments have been incorporated into the wilderness recommendation.

The ability to provide long-term protective management is due largely to the fact that the area is self-protecting because of rugged topographic relief and/or dense juniper forests. Topography, rocky soils, and trees provide barriers to vehicle access into the WSA except along established cherry stem roads and ways. These roads and ways can be closed to public access at the WSA's boundary roads. Continued limited use of existing vehicle routes for livestock operators or for administrative access to state inholdings would not compromise wilderness characteristics providing these inholdings continue to be managed in the same manner by the State of Idaho. The development of State inholdings would greatly diminish the wilderness values of the area.

There are 10 miles of minimally constructed cherry stem roads and ways which need to be blocked to public access in order to enhance wilderness management under the wilderness recommendation. Some non-WSA lands were also included in the wilderness recommendations to improve wilderness management.

Although the WSA can be managed for wilderness, management to maintain or improve ecological values associated with wilderness may not be feasible without special management stipulations from Congress. The long-term protection of multiple use objectives in the WSA is in part dependent upon restoring good ecological conditions to plant communities through vegetation manipulation. The continued use of the area for livestock grazing would not allow natural vegetation patterns to exist. The North Fork WSA can receive sufficient benefits from vegetation manipulation without impacting the area's wilderness characteristics or interfering with the establishment of livestock grazing systems also essential for maintaining good ecological condition within the affected areas.

E. Public Comments

Public comment overwhelmingly supported wilderness designation in WSA 16-40. Comments primarily concentrated on the North Fork WSA, and to a much lesser extent on the implementation of the All Wilderness or the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative for all five WSAs in the study. The proposed action for WSA 16-40 presented in the Draft Owyhee Wilderness Plan Amendment/EIS was the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative. As a result of public comment, the recommendation was changed to show part of the WSA as suitable. Comments specific to the North Fork WSA included:

Pro-Wilderness

1. North Fork contains some of the best wildlands in Owyhee County.
2. Area offers all the wilderness attributes; these attributes are of high quality.
3. Immense geological diversity and the chances of solitude and quiet are very high.
4. Exceptional scenic beauty.
5. Valuable recreation and wildlife resources.
6. Administrative protection (a Special Recreation Management Area) does not provide level of protection which wilderness designation would assure.
7. Area has scientific and ecological value for its sensitive species of wildlife and plants.
8. Unique combination of rhyolitic rock and climatic juniper/sagebrush ecosystem not represented in NWPS nor in other study areas. The area has a remarkable blending and intermingling of rock pillars, vegetation, and canyonlands which makes it a powerful primitive recreation experience.
9. Wilderness designation of the area would have little conflict with other resource values or uses.

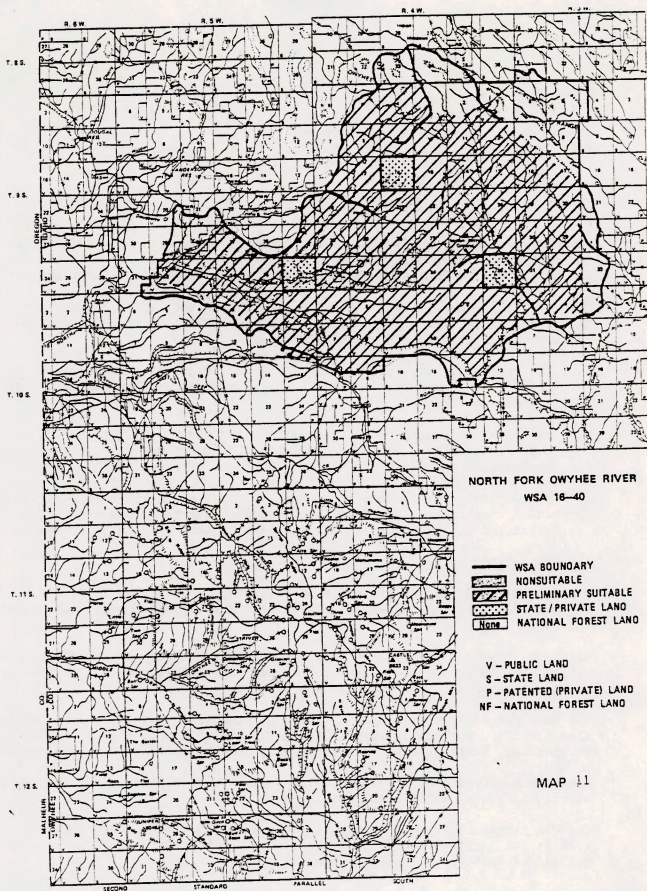
Anti-Wilderness

1. Area does not meet recommendations for suitable wilderness.
2. Wilderness should not be identified close to private lands.
3. Solitude opportunities low because of Mud Flat Road, low-flying aircraft, and close proximity to ranch sites.

4. Area should be multiple use, not single use.
5. Junipers and brush in area need to be treated to restore condition to plant communities and restore/improve grazing systems.
6. There are roads into the area.
7. Wilderness designation would prohibit motorized recreation use of area.

Comments by Government Agencies

No government agency provided comments specific to this WSA. Both the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the Department of Lands, and the Owyhee County Commissioners supported the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative. Other government agencies, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the National Park Service, asked for clarification of issues concerning the description of the environment or the application of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978.



Owyhee

Big Willow Spring WSA (16-41)

<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Preliminary Suitable Acres</u>	<u>Nonsuitable Acres</u>
6,210	0	6,210

A. General Description

The WSA lies about 95 miles south-southwest of Boise, Idaho, within Owyhee County. It is located in the southern half of the Owyhee Resource Area on the west slope of Juniper Mountain several miles from the Idaho-Oregon border.

The WSA lies on the juniper covered rugged canyon country of Juniper Mountain. Elevations range from 5,000 to 5,600 feet. The WSA is divided into three major types of topographic/vegetation areas:

- a. The canyon and tributary canyons of Pole Creek reaching depths of 200 feet. The canyons are typically narrow and meandering with very dense riparian vegetation.
- b. The northern breaks (Pole Creek Breaks) or hilly area typified by a number of shallow, rocky washes defined by numerous rock outcroppings. Western juniper is scattered throughout the breaks area.
- c. The southern and eastern smooth or flattened ridge known as Horse Flat, which appears as a plateau-like formation covered with a vegetative mosaic of dense juniper stands and small sagebrush-grass openings.

B. Wilderness Values

The Big Willow Spring WSA is 6,210 acres in size. Less than 1% of the WSA is minimally impacted by fences, small water developments, ways, and boundary roads.

Although the WSA is relatively small, it has very rugged meandering canyons, hills, rock outcrops and juniper forests or other dense vegetation which provide outstanding opportunities for solitude.

The same natural features which provide outstanding opportunities for solitude also provide for a highly scenic area which would attract people interested in backpacking, hunting, fishing, sightseeing, photography and wildlife viewing.

The rugged canyonlands and surrounding juniper covered ridges and rock outcrops of the WSA are of exceptional scenic quality.

The WSA provides habitat for the "sensitive" species of bobcat; however, the area is not large enough by itself to protect a substantial portion of the habitat of this wide ranging species.

C. Energy and Minerals

There are no known energy or mineral resources in the WSA. There are no mining claims in the WSA. No leasing for oil and gas exploration has occurred in the WSA.

D. Manageability

The Big Willow Spring WSA could be managed in the long term as designated wilderness to protect its wilderness characteristics if small adjustments in the boundaries occurred.

The area is self-protecting because of rugged topographic relief and/or dense juniper forests. Topography, rocky soils, and trees provide barriers to vehicle access into the WSA except along established ways. These ways can readily be closed to public access at the WSA's boundary roads. Continued limited use of existing vehicle routes for livestock operators would not compromise existing wilderness characteristics.

There would also be a need for an adjustment away from the WSA boundary roads in the northern tip of the WSA to improve the overall configuration.

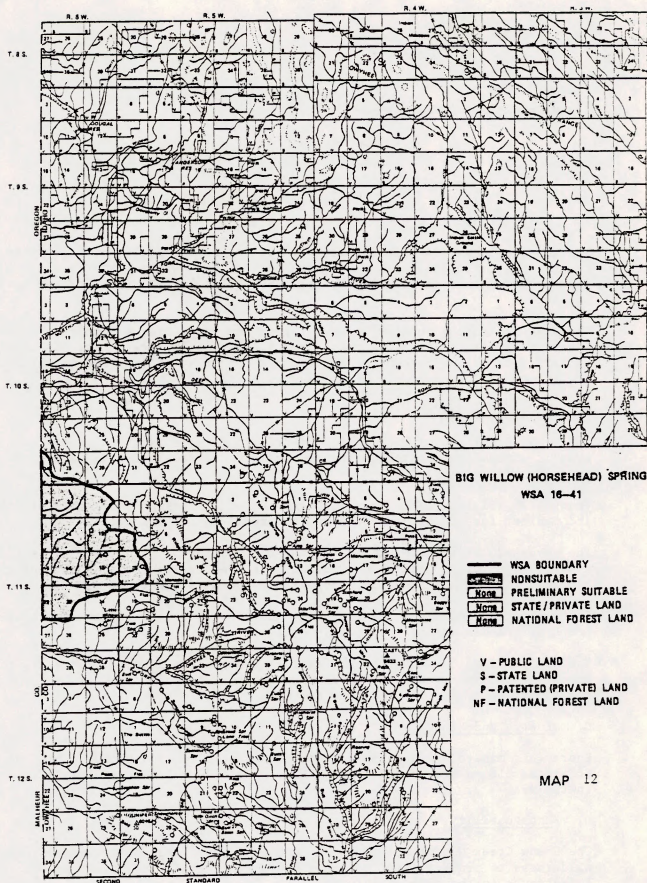
Though the WSA can be managed for wilderness characteristics, management to maintain or improve other multiple use values associated with wilderness may not be feasible without special management stipulations. The long-term protection of multiple use objectives in the WSA is in part dependent upon restoring good ecological conditions to plant communities through vegetation manipulation. The continued use of the area for livestock grazing will not allow natural vegetation patterns to exist. Though the vegetation treatments allowed under special stipulations would improve the WSA's ecological condition without affecting its wilderness values, the additional forage produced could not be allocated to livestock. Therefore, an imbalance in livestock use could occur on Juniper Mountain and cause difficulty in implementing grazing systems to improve the overall livestock management of the mountain. The Big Willow Spring area can be better integrated into the management program (intensive grazing management systems integrated with land treatments to reduce impacts of livestock grazing) for the Juniper Mountain WSA complex as a whole if it is not designated wilderness.

E. Public Comments

Only one public comment specifically supported WSA 16-41 for wilderness designation. All other comments were principally concerned with implementing the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative or the All Wilderness Alternative for the WSA. The proposed action for WSA 16-41 was the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative in the Draft Owyhee Wilderness Plan Amendment/EIS.

Comments by Other Government Agencies

No government agency provided comments specific to this WSA. Both the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and Department of Lands, and the Owyhee County Commissioners supported the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative. Other government agencies, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the National Park Service, asked for clarification of issues concerning the description of the environment of the application of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978.



Owyhee

Squaw Creek Canyon WSA (16-42)

<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Preliminary Suitable Acres</u>	<u>Nonsuitable Acres</u>
10,780	0	10,780

A. General Description

The WSA lies about 95 miles south-southwest of Boise, Idaho, within Owyhee County. It is located in the southern half of the Owyhee Resource Area on the northern slopes of Juniper Mountain several miles from the Idaho-Oregon border.

The WSA lies on the juniper covered rugged canyon country of Juniper Mountain's northern slopes. Elevations range from 5,000 to 6,700 feet. The WSA consists primarily of a long descending ridge and alternative smaller ridges which break away to form a canyon which reaches depths of 400 feet.

B. Wilderness Values

The Squaw Creek Canyon WSA is 10,780 acres in size. Less than 1% of the area is minimally impacted by fences, small water developments, ways, and boundary roads.

Though the WSA is relatively small, its rugged canyons, hills, rock outcrops and juniper forests provide outstanding opportunities for solitude.

The same natural features which provide outstanding opportunities for solitude also provide for an area which would attract people interested in backpacking, hunting, fishing, sightseeing, photography and wildlife viewing.

The rugged canyonlands and surrounding juniper covered ridges and rock outcrops of the WSA are of good scenic quality.

The WSA provides habitat for the "sensitive" species of bobcat; however, the area is not large enough by itself to protect a substantial portion of the habitat of this wide ranging species.

C. Energy and Minerals

Energy and mineral resources have not been specifically located in the WSA. No mining claims are on file in the WSA. Also, no oil and gas leases exist in the WSA.

D. Manageability

The Squaw Creek Canyon WSA could be managed in the long term as designated wilderness to protect its wilderness characteristics if relatively small adjustments in the boundaries occurred.

The area is self-protecting because of rugged topographic relief and/or dense juniper forests. Topography, rocky soils, and trees provide barriers to vehicle access into the WSA except along established cherry stem roads and ways. These roads and ways can readily be closed to public access at the WSA's boundary roads. Continued limited use of existing vehicle routes by livestock operators would not compromise existing wilderness characteristics.

There are three miles of cherry stem roads and ways which would need to be physically blocked to public access in order to enhance wilderness management of the WSA if recommended for wilderness designation.

Though the WSA can be managed for wilderness characteristics, management to maintain or improve multiple use values associated with wilderness are not feasible. The long-term protection of multiple use objectives in the WSA is in part dependent upon restoring good ecological conditions to plant communities through vegetation manipulation. The continued use of the area for livestock grazing would not allow natural vegetation patterns to exist. Where proposed land treatments are widespread, wilderness management objectives would not be compatible with vegetation treatment objectives.

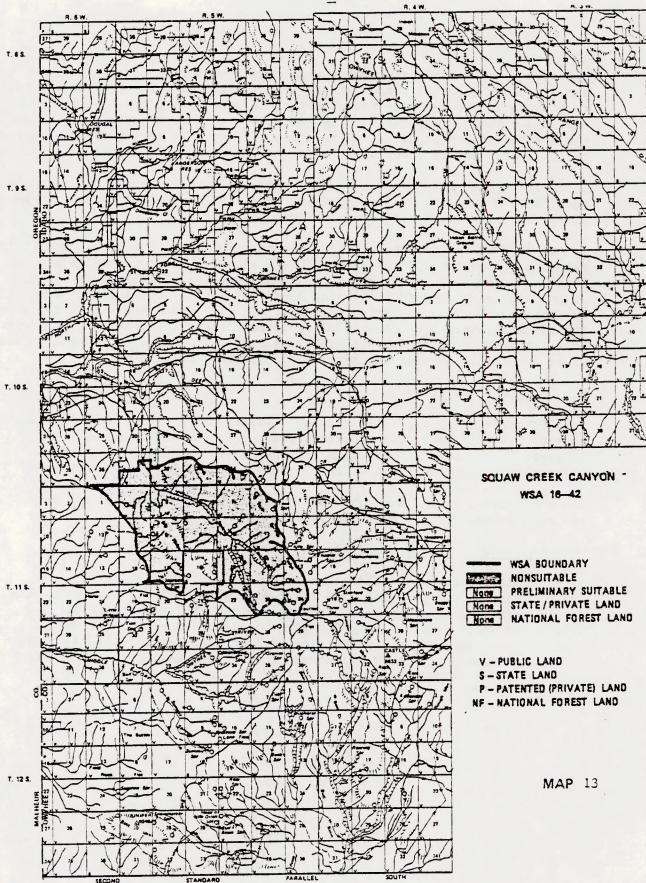
E. Public Comments

Only one comment specifically addressed wilderness in WSA 16-42. Comments were principally concerned with implementing the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative. The proposed action for WSA 16-42 was the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative in the Draft Owyhee Wilderness Plan Amendment/EIS.

The one comment specific to WSA 16-42 stated that the area did not meet the recommendations for suitable wilderness.

Comments by Other Government Agencies

No government agency provided comments specific to this WSA. Both the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and Department of Lands, and the Owyhee County Commissioners supported the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative. Other government agencies, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the National Park Service, asked for clarification of issues concerning the description of the environment or the application of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978.



Owyhee

Middle Fork Owyhee River WSA (16-45)

<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Preliminary Suitable Acres</u>	<u>Nonsuitable Acres</u>
14,180	0	14,180

A. General Description

The WSA lies about 100 miles south-southwest of Boise, Idaho, within Owyhee County. It is located in the southern half of the Owyhee Resource Area on the southwest slopes of Juniper Mountain several miles from the Idaho-Oregon border.

The WSA lies on the juniper covered rugged canyon country of Juniper Mountain's southwest slopes. Elevations range from 5,000 to 6,700 feet. The mountain is sharply dissected by the V-shaped canyons of the Middle Fork Owyhee River and its numerous small tributary canyons and draws. As the river flows westward, it evolves into a 200-foot deep sheer to vertical-walled, meandering canyon which cuts through a hilly area and gently rolling plateau. The top of Juniper Mountain is covered with dense stands of juniper. As elevations drop to the west, juniper stands become thinner until they become only widely scattered, isolated trees.

B. Wilderness Values

The Middle Fork Owyhee River WSA is 14,180 acres in size. Less than 2% of the area is minimally impacted by fences, small water developments, ways, and boundary roads. Though the WSA is relatively small, its rugged canyons, hills, rock outcrops and juniper forests provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. The same natural features which provide outstanding opportunities for solitude also provide for an area which would attract people interested in backpacking, hunting, fishing, sightseeing, photography and wildlife viewing.

The rugged canyonlands and surrounding juniper covered ridges and rock outcrops of the WSA are of good scenic quality. The WSA provides habitat for the "sensitive" species of bobcat; however, the area is not large enough by itself to protect a substantial portion of the habitat of this wide ranging species.

C. Energy and Minerals

Energy and mineral resources have not been specifically located in the WSA. No mining claims are on file in the WSA. No oil and gas leases exist in the WSA.

D. Manageability

The Middle Fork Owyhee River WSA could be managed in the long term as designated wilderness to protect its wilderness characteristics if relatively small adjustments in the boundaries occurred.

The area is self-protecting because of rugged topographic relief and/or dense juniper forests. Topography, rocky soils, and trees provide barriers to vehicle access into the WSA except along established cherry stem roads and ways. These roads and ways can be closed to public access at the WSA's boundary roads. Continued limited use of existing vehicle routes by livestock operators or for administrative access to State inholdings would not compromise existing wilderness characteristics providing these inholdings continue to be managed in the same manner by the State. The development of State inholdings would greatly diminish the wilderness values of the area.

There are six miles of minimally constructed cherry stem roads and ways which would need to be blocked to public access in order to enhance wilderness management if the WSA was recommended for wilderness designation.

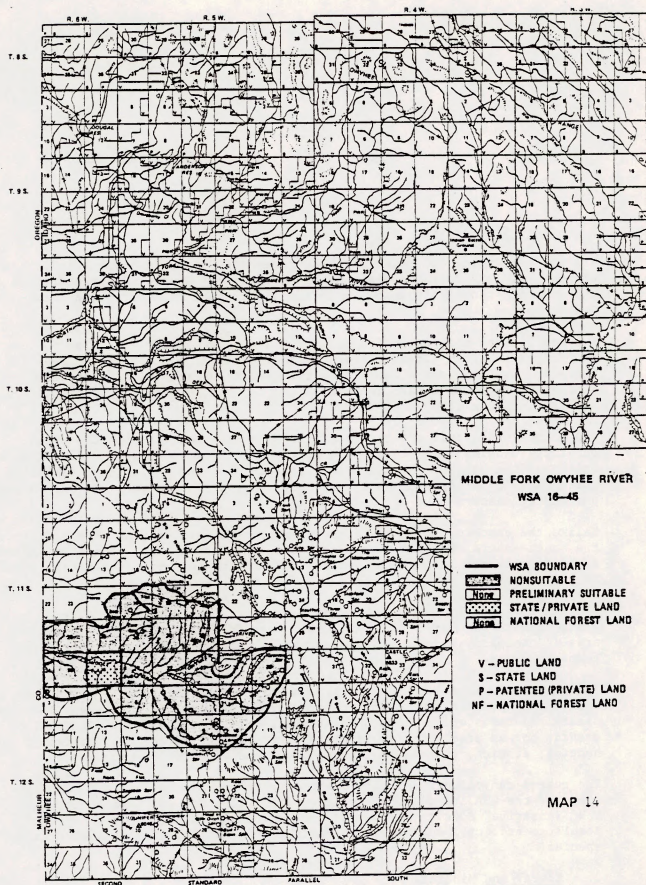
Though the WSA can be managed for wilderness characteristics, management to maintain or improve multiple use values associated with wilderness is not feasible. The long-term protection of multiple use objectives in the WSA is in part dependent upon restoring good ecological conditions to plant communities through vegetation manipulation. The continued use of the area for livestock grazing will not allow natural vegetation patterns to exist. In the WSA where proposed land treatments are widespread, wilderness management objectives would not be compatible with vegetation treatment objectives.

E. Public Comments

No comments specifically addressed wilderness in WSA 16-45. Comments were principally concerned with implementing the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative. The proposed action for WSA 16-45 was the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative in the Draft Owyhee Wilderness Plan Amendment/EIS.

Comments by Other Government Agencies

No government agency provided comments specific to this WSA. Both the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and Department of Lands, and the Owyhee County Commissioners supported the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative. Other government agencies, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the National Park Service, asked for clarification of issues concerning the description of the environment or the application of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978.



Owyhee

West Fork Red Canyon WSA (16-47)

<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Preliminary Suitable Acres</u>	<u>Nonsuitable Acres</u>
12,970	0	12,970

A. General Description

The WSA lies about 100 miles south-southwest of Boise, Idaho, within Owyhee County. It is located in the southern half of the Owyhee Resource Area on the southern slopes of Juniper Mountain about eight miles from the Idaho-Oregon border.

The WSA lies on the juniper covered rugged canyon country of Juniper Mountain's southern slopes. From the south-central portion of the WSA, the landscape evolves from a gently rolling sagebrush basin with scattered juniper to rugged mountainous terrain and canyons covered with dense to moderately dense stands of juniper.

The mountainous areas are cut by six major north-south, V-shaped canyons, the largest being the deep canyons of the West Fork and East Fork Red Canyon Creek. Lying between the East and West Fork is a large flattened tableland cut in half by a large unnamed tributary canyon. The canyons sharply dissect the entire eastern half of the WSA.

Unlike the eastern canyons, the three smaller western canyons do not dissect the south-central rolling sagebrush basin, but rather break down or disappear after leaving the southern fringe on the western and northern mountain areas.

B. Wilderness Values

The West Fork Red Canyon WSA is 12,970 acres in size. Less than 1% of the area is minimally impacted by fences, small water developments, ways, and boundary roads.

Though the WSA is relatively small, its rugged canyons, hills, rock outcrops and juniper forests provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. The same natural features which provide outstanding opportunities for solitude also provide for an area which would attract people interested in backpacking, hunting, fishing, sightseeing, photography and wildlife viewing.

The rugged canyonlands and surrounding juniper covered ridges and rock outcrops of the WSA are of good scenic quality. The WSA provides habitat for the "sensitive" species of bobcat; however, the area is not large enough by itself to protect a substantial portion of the habitat of this wide ranging species.

C. Energy and Minerals

Energy and mineral resources have not been specifically located in the WSA. No mining claims are on file in the WSA. No oil and gas leases exist in the WSA.

D. Manageability

The West Fork Red Canyon WSA could be managed in the long term as designated wilderness to protect its wilderness characteristics if relatively small adjustments in the boundaries occurred.

The area is self-protecting because of rugged topographic relief and/or dense juniper forests. Topography, rocky soils, and trees provide barriers to vehicle access into the WSA except along established cherry stem roads and ways. These roads and ways can be closed to public access at the WSA's boundary roads. Continued limited use of existing vehicle routes by livestock operators would not compromise existing wilderness characteristics.

There are three miles of cherry stem roads and ways which would need to be blocked to public access in order to enhance wilderness management if the WSA was recommended for wilderness designation.

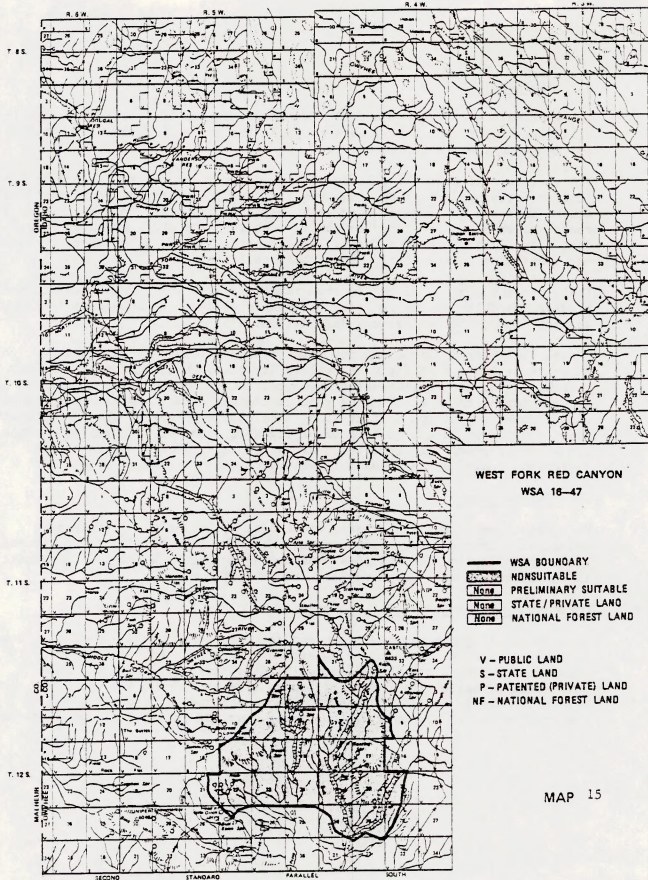
Though the WSA can be managed for wilderness characteristics, management to maintain or improve multiple use values associated with wilderness are not feasible. The long-term protection of multiple use objectives in the WSA is in part dependent upon restoring good ecological conditions to plant communities through vegetation manipulation. The continued use of the area for livestock grazing would not allow natural vegetation patterns to exist. In the WSA where proposed land treatments are widespread, wilderness management objectives would not be compatible with vegetation treatment objectives.

E. Public Comments

No comment specifically addressed wilderness in WSA 16-47. Comments were principally concerned with implementing the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative. The proposed action for WSA 16-47 was the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative in the Draft Owyhee Wilderness Plan Amendment/EIS.

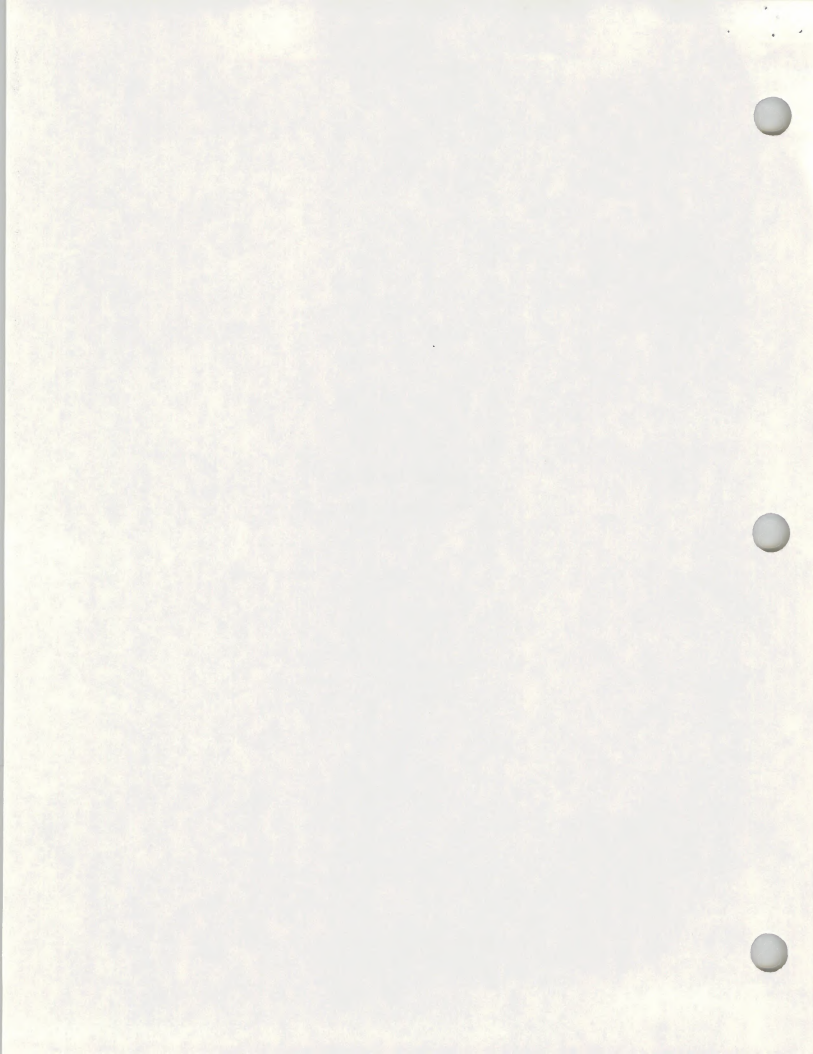
Comments by Other Government Agencies

No government agency provided comments specific to this WSA. Both the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and Department of Lands, and the Owyhee County Commissioners supported the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative. Other government agencies, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the National Park Service, asked for clarification of issues concerning the description of the environment or the application of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978.



SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS
OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

OWYHEE



OWYHEE WILDERNESS STUDY

Summary and Analysis of
Public Hearing Record

Bureau of Land Management
Idaho

September 1982

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS
OF PUBLIC HEARING RECORD ON THE
OWYHEE PLAN AMENDMENT WILDERNESS STUDY

A public hearing announcement for the Owyhee Plan Amendment proposed wilderness recommendations was published in the Federal Register on June 4, 1982. Written notification of the hearings and information on the study were sent to Governor John Evans of Idaho; U.S. Senators James McClure and Steve Symms; U.S. Representatives Larry Craig and George Hansen; four members of the Idaho State Legislature; six federal agencies and departments; eleven Idaho State officials and agencies; the County Commissioners of four local counties and one local agency; twenty-six organizations and numerous individuals.

The hearings were held in Oregon at Jordan Valley on July 7, 1982, and in Idaho at Boise on July 8, 1982. Twenty-six people presented oral and/or written testimony at the hearings, and an additional seventy-one people submitted comments by mail. Some of those who submitted comments by mail also testified at the hearings.

THE PUBLIC HEARINGS

The hearing officer in Jordan Valley was Pearl Parker, BLM Vale District Manager. The hearing officer in Boise was Wayne Zinne, BLM Coeur d'Alene District Manager. The BLM was also represented by Joe Zimmer, Boise District Manager; Ted Milesnick, Boise District Environmental Coordinator; Oscar Anderson, Owyhee Resource Area Manager, Boise District; John Benedict, Boise District Wilderness Coordinator.

Twenty-six people provided oral and/or written testimony at the hearings. Of these, nine supported the BLM's original proposal of a No Action/No Wilderness Alternative for the 93,610 acres of the five Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) in the study; five people supported the All Wilderness Alternative for the five WSAs; none supported any partial alternative, but five supported wilderness in general; seven were against wilderness in general.

The elected officials, government agencies, organizations, and individuals who gave oral or written testimony in support of BLM's original proposal of a No Action/No Wilderness Alternative are listed below.

Elected Officials

Ernie Bahem, Owyhee County Commissioner

Local, State, and Federal Agencies

None

Organizations

Ray Blair, Glenns Ferry Grange Association
Forest Fretwell, Owyhee Cattlemen's Association
Mike Mogensen, Idaho Cattlemen's Association

Individuals

Wendell Collins
Theodore T. Cowgill
Judi Hanley
Mike Hanley
Tim Lowry
Bill Lowry
Twila Montano
Paul Nettleton
Dennis Swisher
Mike Stanford
Pat Payne
Ted Payne

The elected officials, government agencies, organizations, and individuals who gave oral or written testimony in support of wilderness in all five WSAs are as follows..

Elected Officials

None

Local, State, and Federal Agencies

None

Organizations

Bruce Boccard, Committee for Idaho's High Desert
Alan Hausrath, Idaho Environmental Council
Chris Yoder, Middle Snake Group of the Sierra Club

Individuals

Ernie Day
Marjorie Hayes
Bob Krumm
Randall Morris
Ed Wardell
Ted Weigold

COMMUNICATIONS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS

The Owyhee County Commissioners gave oral testimony and written communication in support of the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative. These Commissioners are Ernie Bahem, Donald L. Davis, and James W. Purdom. They supported this alternative because they felt wilderness designation is not in the best interest of multiple use management. There would be no expectation for improvement in plant communities because of restrictions or prohibitions on juniper removal; sagebrush-bunchgrass areas need to be protected from further juniper encroachment. The administrative designations (Special Recreation Management Areas) as identified in the alternative would protect primitive values. On the other hand, the implementation of grazing systems in affected allotments could be

difficult under wilderness management; these systems are important to achieving needed improvement in range condition and associated multiple use benefits. The No Action/No Wilderness Alternative would provide better protection to all wildlife species because of greater flexibility in habitat management. Predators would be a great detriment to wildlife under wilderness management. Lastly, the areas should remain open for mineral and energy exploration.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS, DEPARTMENTS, AND AGENCIES

No oral comments were provided.

Jerry M. Conley, Director of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, provided one written comment in support of the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative. The Department believes that managers must have the flexibility necessary to manipulate vegetation composition to improve the habitat base within the areas for wildlife as well as domestic livestock.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM FEDERAL OFFICIALS, DEPARTMENTS, AND AGENCIES

No oral comments were provided.

Three written communications were received from the National Park Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The comment from the National Park Service was from Richard L. Winters of the Pacific Northwest Region Office. Because significant wilderness characteristics could be protected by both wilderness or recognized Special Recreation Management Areas, he had no objections to the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative. In addition, he requested further clarification of archaeological sites with regard to their eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places.

The two communications from the Bureau of Indian Affairs concerned the study's compliance with the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (PL 95-341). Martin C. Unka, Land Operations Officer from the Eastern Nevada Agency, did not know of any designated areas or locations within the study areas where sacred grounds were involved.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM ORGANIZATIONS

Four written comments were received from organizations in support of the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative. Comments were provided by:

1. Daniel A. Poole, President, Wildlife Management Institute
2. Mike Mogensen, Executive Vice-President, Idaho Cattlemen's Association
3. Gene Tindall, President, Owyhee Cattlemen's Association
4. John D. Wells, Managing Director, Minerals Exploration Coalition

The Wildlife Management Institute supported the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative because it was considered the best for wildlife. Wilderness designation would preclude management options to manipulate juniper and protect riparian areas for wildlife.

The Mineral Exploration Coalition supported the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative because it would allow the areas to remain open for mineral and energy exploration.

Both the Idaho Cattlemen's Association and Owyhee Cattlemen's Association supported the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative. They believed that all resources in the study areas must be maximized under the multiple use concept. These two organizations expressed their long-standing policy against any more wilderness in Idaho, particularly on BLM lands. Both groups feel that the areas are not natural. Wilderness designation would make the areas less accessible to the public for recreation and resource production. Wilderness would provide a management system too inflexible for the areas.

Six written comments were received from other organizations in support of the All Wilderness Alternative. These organizations were:

1. Bruce Boccard, Committee for Idaho's High Desert
2. Dave Foreman, Issues Coordinator, EARTH FIRST
3. Alan Hausrath, President, Idaho Environmental Council
4. William R. Meiners, Idaho Wildlife Federation
5. Charles A. Wellner, Chairman, Idaho Natural Areas Coordinating Committee
6. Chris Yoder, Chairman, Middle Snake Group of the Sierra Club

Each of these organizations felt that wilderness values under the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative would be sacrificed in the study areas to allow for more productivity in range resources. They felt that the analysis presented in the Draft Owyhee Wilderness Plan Amendment/EIS did not provide a fair evaluation of wilderness values in relation to other resource values. The Special Recreation Management Areas identified in the alternative would not provide protection equivalent to wilderness designation. They argued that wilderness designation would have little conflict with other resource values in the area. The area's exceptional wilderness characteristics (solitude and primitive recreation opportunities; naturalness), scenic quality, scientific and ecological values, and archaeological values warrant wilderness designation. The areas would add western juniper forests in the Sagebrush-Steppe ecosystem to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM INDIVIDUALS

Five individuals supported the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative. Fifty-four other individuals supported wilderness designation, particularly in the North Fork Owyhee River WSA. Though no one identified a specific alternative, 41 individuals expressed interest in wilderness for the North Fork WSA. The rationales for or against wilderness echoed those summarized under COMMUNICATIONS FROM ORGANIZATIONS.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

Of the total 97 written or oral comments received, 41 wanted wilderness designation for the North Fork Owyhee River WSA (no specific alternative identified), 17 supported the No Action/No Wilderness

Alternative, 14 favored the All Wilderness Alternative, 10 were for wilderness in general, 9 were against wilderness in general, 5 took no position, and 1 wanted wilderness in the North Fork and Big Willow Spring WSA (16-41).

Most of those favoring wilderness believed that designation would be the best way of preserving the outstanding wilderness values of the study areas. The major reasons for wanting wilderness designation, particularly in the North Fork Owyhee River WSA, were as follows.

1. Area contains some of the best wildlands in Owyhee County.
2. Area offers all the wilderness attributes; these attributes are of high quality.
3. Immense geological diversity and the chances of solitude and quiet are very high.
4. Exceptional scenic beauty.
5. Valuable recreation and wildlife resources.
6. Administrative protection (a Special Recreation Management Area) does not provide level of protection which wilderness designation would assure.
7. Area has scientific and ecological value for its "sensitive" species of wildlife and plants.
8. Unique combination of rhyolitic rock and climatic juniper/sagebrush ecosystem not represented in National Wilderness Preservation System nor in other study areas. The area has a remarkable blending and intermingling of rock pillars, vegetation, and canyonlands which makes it a powerful primitive recreation experience.
9. Wilderness designation of the area would have little conflict with other resource values or uses.
10. Wilderness designation would contribute to western juniper/Sagebrush-Steppe ecosystem in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Those opposing any wilderness designation felt that the area's multiple use values could best be protected and developed without wilderness management. The major reasons cited for opposition to wilderness are as follows.

1. Wilderness designation is not in the best interest of multiple use.
2. Wilderness designation would not provide the management flexibility necessary to control juniper invasion and restore good vegetation condition to plant communities for the benefit of livestock grazers and wildlife.

3. Area's significant wilderness characteristics could be protected by the recognition of a Special Recreation Management Area.
4. Other resource values could not be maximized under wilderness management.
5. The areas should remain open for mineral and energy exploration.
6. Wilderness designation would prohibit motorized recreational use of the areas for the general public.

DRAFT LEGISLATION
AND
DRAFT TRANSMITTAL LETTERS

BLM WILDERNESS REVIEW

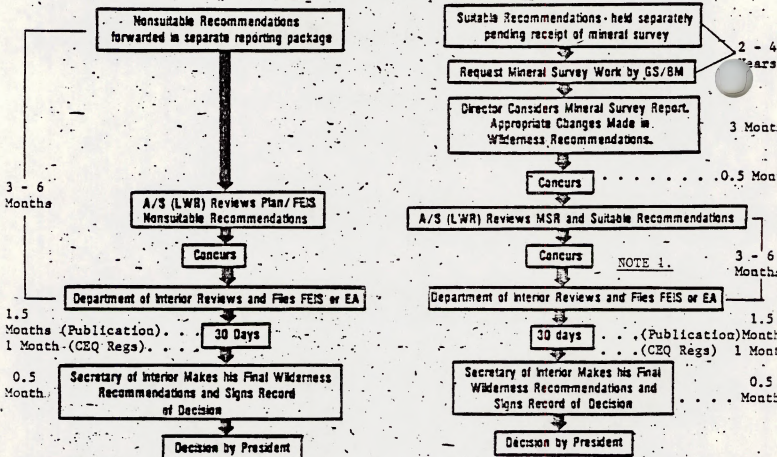
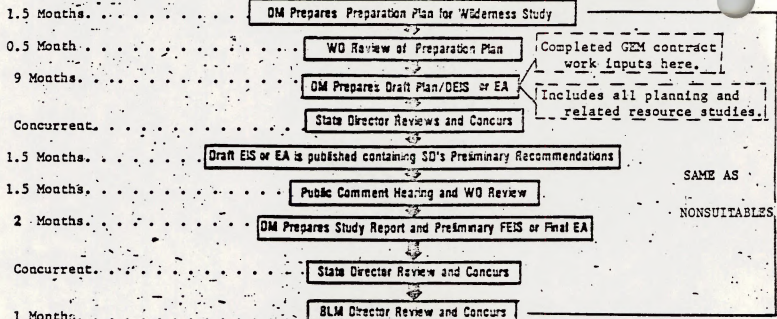
AND

REPORTING PROCESS

Nonsuitables
Average Time Frames

BLM WILDERNESS REVIEW REPORTING PROCESS

SUITABLES
Average Time Frame



23.5 - 26.5 Months
for Nonsuitable Recommendations

4 Years - 3 Months
to 6 Years - 3 Months
for Suitable Recommendations

NOTE 1. This period includes review by OMB and other agencies. Legislative Counsel coordinates distribution of documents to OMB.

BLM WILDERNESS REVIEW REPORTING PROCESS

1. District Manager prepares the preparation plan for the wilderness study and it is submitted through the State Office to the Washington Office for review and approval.

2. District Manager transmits the draft plan with preliminary wilderness recommendations to the State Director for review and concurrence in accordance with the BLM planning regulations. A copy is also transmitted to the BLM Director for informal review.

3. State Director concurs and files draft plan and draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) or environmental assessment (EA) in accordance with BLM planning regulations. The wilderness element of plan is prominently labeled as "preliminary recommendations—subject to change during administrative review" (or words to that effect), accompanied by a paragraph describing the roles of the Secretary, and the President. In the case of a resource management plan, the DEIS states that it is the draft for both an FEIS on the entire plan and a separate legislative FEIS on the wilderness element of the plan. The subsequent 60-day comment period, with hearings, satisfies the requirements of the Wilderness Act, section 3(d) and the CEQ regulations.

4. After making any needed revisions in the plan, based on public comment, the State Director submits the preliminary wilderness recommendation, preliminary FEIS on the plan, and summary of wilderness-related public comment to the Director for review.

5. State Director files the proposed resource management plan and FEIS on the RMP, containing preliminary wilderness recommendations. Not earlier than 30 days after this, the District Manager, with the concurrence of the State Director and consistent with the requirements of the planning regulations, approves the RMP and signs Record of Decision (ROD) for all elements of the plan except wilderness. In these documents, the wilderness element is labeled, "preliminary recommendation—subject to change during administrative review" (or words to that effect). In the case of an MFP amendment, the amendment will not be approved until final action has been taken on the wilderness recommendations. In the case of a transition MFP, the wilderness portion of the plan will not be implemented until the final action has been taken.

6. State Director prepares wilderness study report and the wilderness preliminary FEIS. State Director transmits the wilderness study reports

to the Director in an annual separating package.

7. The BLM Director reviews wilderness study report/FEIS ("review copy"). At this point, the preliminary recommendations for suitable and nonsuitable areas are separated. Because mineral surveys must be conducted for suitable recommendations, these recommendations will be held by the Director until mineral survey work is completed. The same basic wilderness study report will be used for both "nonsuitable" and "suitable" packages, with different recommendations inserted as appropriate. The following describes the two separate processes used by the Director for the reporting of "suitable" and "nonsuitable" recommendations.

a. *Preliminary Recommendation is "Nonsuitable"*. The Director reviews the Wilderness Study Report and the preliminary FEIS. If the nonsuitable recommendations are acceptable, the package is transmitted to the Assistant Secretary for Land and Water Resources. Following Assistant Secretary review and approval, the document is forwarded to the Secretary. Any preliminary "suitable" recommendations contained in the FEIS are clearly labeled "preliminary recommendation, pending completion of mineral surveys" or similar language. At this point, the Director and Assistant Secretary are officially making only nonsuitable recommendations. The Secretary's recommendations to the President in the Record of Decision will cover only the nonsuitable lands addressed in the FEIS.

b. *Preliminary Recommendation is "Suitable"*. After review of the study report/preliminary FEIS, the Director requests mineral surveys by USGS/BLM only on lands recommended as suitable. These suitable recommendations are then held by the Director until mineral survey reports are available. When the mineral survey reports are completed, the State Director reviews the original "suitable" recommendations in light of the mineral survey results. If the State Director concurs with the original recommendations, he forwards them along with the mineral survey reports to the Director for review and concurrence. Recommendations and mineral surveys are then transmitted to the Assistant Secretary for Land and Water Resources and then to the Secretary of the Interior.

However, if the State Director finds the "suitable" recommendations inappropriate due to new information acquired through the mineral survey, the recommendations are returned to the District Manager. At that time, the District Manager is responsible for

preparing a revised recommendation and, if necessary, an EIS Supplement analyzing and documenting how the new information affects the areas' suitability for wilderness designation. The revised recommendations and Wilderness Study Report, and the EIS supplement if necessary, would be transmitted for review and concurrence by the State Director, Director and Assistant Secretary.

8. The Wilderness study report/FEIS ("review copy") is reviewed by Department of the Interior. The Department may consult the Office of Management and Budget at this stage, with respect to interagency review of the proposed wilderness recommendations currently under review.

9. The Department files the wilderness FEIS. The BLM announces that the FEIS has been filed; public can obtain copies.

10. The Secretary signs Record of Decision and transmits his recommendation with wilderness study report/FEIS to the President.

